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LOS ANGELES

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

Exhorted by the maid, without delay:
The youth approach'd the tree to seize the prey.

Argonautica Bk. 4.

Drawn by Rich.d Cook. *Engraved by [illegible]*

Published by Suttaby, Evance & Fox London.
[illegible]

THE

WORKS

OF THE

BRITISH POETS;

INCLUDING THE MOST ESTEEMED

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

The Greek and Roman Authors.

COLLATED WITH THE BEST EDITIONS:

BY

THOMAS PARK, F.S.A.

VOL. XLIV.

CONTAINING

THE FIRST AND SECOND VOLUMES OF

PRESTON'S VERSION OF

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1818.

THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

TRANSLATED;

WITH

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS,

CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND EXPLANATORY.

BY

W. PRESTON, ESQ. M.R.I.A.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

TO

THE READER.

If the persons who endeavour to rescue from oblivion neglected merit confessedly attempt a meritorious task, the translators of those ancient writers, who have hitherto failed of obtaining the circulation and celebrity justly due to their learning and genius, are fairly entitled, at all events, to the praise of good intention. Should these adventurers prove so fortunate, as to acquit themselves, in their respective undertakings, to the satisfaction of the public; they are further entitled to the regard and encouragement, which ought to recompense, but do not uniformly attend, patient and judicious labour, directed to the advancement of taste and science.

The poem of Apollonius Rhodius, now offered to the public in an entirely new version, appeared to the present translator a fair object for such a chivalrous enterprise. At least, the partial admiration and gratitude of one, who had frequently perused, and always with increasing pleasure, this delightful poet, considered his present reputation

and rank, among the illustrious writers of antiquity, as totally inadequate to his intrinsic merits. Apollonius Rhodius, it is true, can by no means be considered as a writer unknown or obscure; yet has he failed of obtaining his just station on the heights of Parnassus. He is chiefly known to professed scholars, and is little in the hands of the modern reader, whose commerce with the ancients is carried on through the medium of translation. Indeed, even when he is remembered among the learned, he is usually introduced in the degrading attitude of a captive, bound to the chariot and following the triumphal pomp of Virgil, who has literally fulfilled, in the person of this poet, his own prediction in the third Georgic,

Aonio rediens deducam vertice musas.

Thus is the name of Apollonius lost, and absorbed in that of his conqueror. His poetical beauties are all hung up, as trophies to decorate the shrine of Virgil. His primary and original claims on our attention, in his own right, are forgotten; and he is honoured only with the derivative and subordinate praise, of having supplied to the Mantuan bard the crude materials and unformed elements from whence some of his beauties have been wrought and fashioned. Thus is he chiefly known to the world, by the vague reputation, the traditional merit, generally taken on trust, that his Loves of Medea and Jason are the groundwork on which Virgil has formed the fourth book of his Æneid. But how small a part is that of the poem! with what happy passages, what various and striking beauties, does it every where abound! The fact

is, that the bard of Alexandria has been worse treated, considering his just pretensions and real merits, than any poet of antiquity; and furnishes a striking instance of the caprice of fortune, and the uncertainty even of literary posthumous reputation. No critic, ancient or modern, has been found to do full justice to the charms of his versification, the beauty of his diction, the apposite illustration of his similies, his picturesque and luminous display of moral and physical nature, his knowledge of the human heart, the sportive graces of his fancy, and those golden visions of bold and excursive imagination, worthy of the fairest names among the Italian poets. No critic has been found, to ascertain with accuracy the obligations of Virgil to this poet.

It is a curious circumstance, to inquire how this has happened. Two Roman writers, of great eminence, have condescended to avail themselves of the talents and the labours of the Alexandrian: yet they have not, in any part of their works, acknowledged the obligation, or paid the smallest tribute of gratitude to his memory. May it not be conjectured, that the poets in question, and their adherents, found an ungenerous interest in the keeping back from view the merits of a rival, whose prominence might tend to overshadow them?—May not the Romans, from a general sentiment of pride and triumph in their great epic poet, have been disposed to consign, if possible, to obscurity, the source from whence he had imbibed his very genius and poetical style and character, and had drawn so many of his softest and purest graces?—The father of epic song rose,

too powerful and vast for such an attempt. The obligations which Virgil owed to Homer, could not be dissembled or concealed, because the poems of Homer were in every hand. But they judged rightly, (as the event has shown) that it might be possible to exclude Apollonius, a writer of inferior note, as an unwelcome visitant, an upbraiding creditor, whose presence would remind the great master of Roman poetry, how much he was indebted to borrowed stores. On him, the partial criticism of Rome might hope to exercise its injustice with impunity.

Certain it is, that two of the great critics of antiquity (from whose sentence there could lie no appeal, were it pronounced on a fair hearing and full deliberation,) have treated the Rhodian poet, in a manner that seems to justify the coldness and neglect which he has now experienced from succeeding ages. But may not these respectable and amiable writers, Quintilian and Longinus, of whose exquisite taste and sound judgment no doubt can be entertained; may they not, in this instance, have been borne away by fashion?—May they not have yielded, in some measure, to the prejudices of the times; and neglected Apollonius, because they found him neglected by others? May they not have hastily taken his character on trust; and adopted the opinion of his mediocrity, without a diligent perusal of his writings? May they not, through excessive admiration of Homer, have wished to decry the founder of a new school?

It is to be remembered, that the critics whom I have mentioned were enthusiastic admirers (as, indeed, who among the ancients was not?) of the

poems of Homer. To him they referred, as to the standard of excellence. From his works, in their opinion, all the rules of good writing were to be drawn. Bold, and perhaps unfortunate, at the same time, was the poet, who, in such a disposition of the literary world, ventured to deviate from the paths that Homer trod, and to establish a new school of writing. The productions of the mighty father of epic song were marked by an unlaboured and unaffected greatness, a sublime simplicity, a style plain, flowing, and unstudied. Stranger to toil and modern refinements, his poetry exhibited more of divine inspiration than of human art. The founder of a new school and sect in composition, the author of a style different, in some measure, and boldly presuming to refine and improve on that of Homer, had many difficulties to encounter, among the idolatrous worshippers of that venerable poet. Like the apostle of some new poetical heresy, he incurred the danger of being torn to pieces by the orthodox and pious rage of devout and zealous critics. At any rate, he could only expect, from the generality of readers, the contempt or the persecution that usually await all teachers of heterodox opinions and novel practices. Apollonius was among the leaders of a new school in poetry; less vigorous, but more gorgeous; less sublime, but more elaborate; less forcible, but more graceful, than that of Homer. For such is the character of the Alexandrian school, and of Virgil, who adopted its manner.

There may be another reason, why the popularity of Apollonius Rhodius was not fully adequate to his poetical merit. His details of religious

ceremonies, of mythology, history, and pedigree, though they render his poem highly valuable to the curious antiquarian, as a treasury of ancient literature, impede the rapidity of the story, and damp the ardour and attention of the reader. Homer, it is true, sometimes admits them, but more sparingly; and his poems are so full of action and incident, that the weight of these episodic dissertations is less felt. It must be confessed, there are many passages in Apollonius, which will appear sufficiently tiresome to the generality of English readers; and I presume the case was nearly the same with the Roman. Certainly, in a moderate degree, such details increase the interest of the narrative, and produce a very happy effect. They give a venerable air of antiquity. They fill the mind with a pleasing, awful gloom; and excite that kind of sensation, which we experience on our entering some ancient Gothic cathedral. Remote antiquity has naturally in it something awful and imposing; so that the very names of ancient heroes, their achievements and destinies, though not in themselves perhaps very great or memorable, possess a magical attraction, that allures and captivates the mind, and fills it with a secret admiration. Hence it is, that we peruse with so much delight the legends, and ancient ballads, that tell of 'Arthur begirt with British and Armoric' knights; and of Charlemagne, with all his peerage. Particular details, such as I have mentioned, further add to the interest of the narrative, by giving to it a form and semblance of veracity, an appearance of reality. They seem to be a sort of corroborating pledges, which the author gives to his

reader, for the truth of what he narrates. Such may be the advantages of this practice, if employed with moderation; but 'nothing in excess,' is a maxim as true in matters of taste as in morality. Apollonius, it must be confessed, indulged his predilection for antiquarian details and religious descriptions; or rather complied with the reigning taste of the day, and of the country to which he belonged, at the expense of his general reputation as a poet; and, like many others, sacrificed to fashion and present popularity the hopes of posterity.

Another circumstance, to render the poem of Apollonius less popular, may be his adoption of the chronological order and historical form, in place of the epic integrity of action, and succinctness of duration. Historical poems will ever be found to excite less powerful interest, than those which are modelled on the truly legitimate epic plan. The judicious practice of Homer, who hurries his reader *in medias res non secus ac notas*, has been applauded by critics in all ages. Apollonius, as well as some other writers, has adopted a different method; and his poem has suffered in proportion. And there are periods in the narrative, at which the poem might have opened with superior advantage. Such as the meeting with Phineus.

Such are the objections which may justly be made to Apollonius. But, surely, his beauties are so numerous and so splendid, that they should completely exempt him from the imputation of mediocrity. I think I shall be justified, in my manner of accounting for the treatment he has re-

ceived from two consummate critics; and in my suspecting them (though I do so with a reverential hesitation) of some degree of prejudice, or, at least, of precipitation, in the sentence which they have passed; if we consider and examine their expressions, in speaking of our poet. Their censures are vague, and convey little of that precise instruction and appropriate remark, which we might naturally expect from such excellent and acute critics. The characters are not sufficiently discriminated, descriptive, or apposite, which they have respectively given of Apollonius. Their censures come from them only incidentally, and bear evident marks of haste and carelessness.—Longinus, for instance, bestows on him a praise which he does not seem entirely to merit, while he withholds that which is fairly due to him; and then, to obscure him entirely by superior and transcendent brightness, he places him beside Homer; a situation, which not even Virgil himself can bear.—Longinus calls Apollonius ἀπλωτος, 'a writer, who never falls into faults or inequalities;' a commendation, which, unless we confine it to the singular beauty and correctness of his versification, style, and diction, cannot be applied to Apollonius; who exhibits many inequalities, and occasional lapses, blended with great beauties. He selects him as an example of the humble mediocrity of genius, that scapes censure only by fearing to risk any thing great or sublime; and, in the words of Horace, *Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellæ.* Without deigning to bestow a critical examination on Apollonius, he condemns him, in the gross, by an insulting interrogation—

'Who would choose rather to be the poet of the Argonautics than Homer?'—No man surely. But does it follow, from that unfair comparison, and from his inferiority to Homer, that Apollonius should rank with the poets of mediocrity?—Suppose the same question should be asked, with respect to Sophocles, to Euripides, to Virgil? I believe there are few who would answer in the affirmative [1].

The words of Quintilian, who coldly damns Apollonius with faint praise, are—*Non contemnendum edidit opus æquali quadam mediocrate.*—Words, that have in them much of the sweeping generality in which assuming and superficial criticism is wont to delight; and carry with them a supercilious pertness of summary condemnation, not unworthy of the modern critical loungers in the shops of booksellers. The attribute of even level mediocrity is by no means descriptive of the character of Apollonius. Sometimes, it is true, in his fondness for the picturesque or the antique, he stoops, with a minute littleness, to the description of local circumstances, manual operations, and religious rites; a failing, from which Homer himself is not exempt. But the Argonautics abounds (as much, perhaps, as any of the remains of antiquity) in some of the most elevated parts of poetry—bold and excursive flights of fancy—daring and original poetical fictions—new and beautiful similitudes, strikingly apposite and happily illustrative—luminous and exquisite descriptions of persons and

[1] Scaliger (with the violence and presumption natural to him) prefers Virgil, and endeavours to degrade Homer. He, doubtless, would answer in the affirmative.

things, joined with a learned and accurate display of sentiment and character. These were the charms that captivated the discerning and judicious Virgil, and led him to imitate our author so largely. And are all these to be condemned, by one stroke of a dictatorial pen, to the degrading station of a plebeian mediocrity?

Another cause, which might have rendered the poem of Apollonius 'caviare to the million,' may be found by a particular reference of the peculiarities of his manner to the period of time when he wrote, and the revolutions that very soon succeeded the publication of the Argonautics. It was not long after the flourishing times of that literary and munificent dynasty of the Ptolemies, that the Roman eagle stooped to grasp the world in her talons, and the Romans swept the potentates and establishments of Greece before them, and became all powerful, and all in all, both for arts and arms. Possessed of universal empire, the Romans became a literary people. It was not surprising, then, that where the Roman government prevailed, there also a tincture of Roman taste should predominate, and give the style and tone of fashion to the learned world. Wealth, power, and authority, all the means of rewarding merit, real or imaginary, were in their hands. The Romans were they, whose favour the interested had the chief inducements to cultivate; and to please whom, the exertions of talent were naturally directed. Is it strange, then, that the prevailing taste should have taken a turn, in some degree, peculiarly and nationally Roman, even among Greeks themselves?—Now, it must be con-

fessed, that in the poem of Apollonius, are some things calculated to render him uninteresting, or even tiresome, to a mere Roman reader, or a reader with the feelings and tastes of a Roman; and these, perhaps, the very particulars which would have gone to the heart, and captivated the feelings of a Greek, reading with the propensities, the impressions, the partialities, and prejudices of a Greek, when and where all was Grecian; when all he saw around him, concurred to justify his partiality and pride. I mean here such passages as I have already mentioned; where the poet enters into details of history, mythology, and genealogy; or alludes to religious rites, ceremonies, and mysteries, which he so frequently does *con amore*. These were topics, highly grateful and engaging to his countrymen, in their better days; but they could not expect to excite such a lively interest, when the power of Grecian empire, and the pride of Grecian spirit, were no more.

Whatever may have been the cause, the fact is, that Apollonius Rhodius has been more neglected, in times ancient and modern, than many of the meanest scribblers of antiquity. And yet, the highest and least equivocal testimony imaginable has been borne to his excellence as a poet, by the most exquisite judge of antiquity, Virgil; and that more strongly than by mere declarations, namely, by the fact of his having chosen him as the model of his style and versification; studied him with the most diligent attention; and imitated many parts of his poem, and incorporated them with his immortal Æneid. It is the noblest eulogy of our poet, that he was the favourite author of Virgil;

and the many applauded passages, which are confessedly imitated from him by the divine master of Latin song, are the best vindication of his genius against the cold contempt with which he has been treated by the two great critics; who, in this solitary instance, seem to depart from the amiable candour, the just discernment and suavity, natural to them.

Nor is Virgil the only poet, who has borrowed from this storehouse of precious materials. Valerius Flaccus, who has chosen the same subject with Apollonius, has trod very closely in his great predecessor's footsteps; and when he has ventured to depart from them, his poem has been so much the worse. This writer has imitated the style and manner of Virgil with tolerable success; but it must be confessed, that the genius of Flaccus seldom soars, and that it never rises so much as when it is invigorated by the muse of Apollonius. It is a remarkable circumstance, which supports strongly the charge of wilful misrepresentation, that Quintilian, who has depreciated Apollonius on the ground of mediocrity, mentions Valerius Flaccus, the servile imitator of that Apollonius, in terms of high respect—*Multum in Valerio Flacco nuper amisimus.* This must induce us to receive his censure of Apollonius with caution.

Other imitations of Apollonius may occasionally be pointed out among the ancient writers, particularly in Ovid. Among the moderns, Milton seems to have studied him with peculiar care, and a marked predilection. Many imitations of the Greek poet, and even adoptions of his very expressions and epithets, may be traced in the

poetical writings of the immortal English bard. It shall be my business, in the course of the ensuing Notes, to point out some of them to the attention of the reader: I shall also have occasion to remark, with what care he studied the writers of the Alexandrian school. That the refined taste of the illustrious Camoëns was formed on the model of the Greek and Roman poets, and cultivated by an intimate acquaintance with them, is manifested throughout the noble poem of the Lusiad; which abounds in allusions to the Pagan mythology, and is enriched with a profusion of graces, drawn from the ancient classics. To the merit of Apollonius Rhodius, in particular, Camoëns seems to have been no stranger. The subject of the Portuguese poem bears a striking resemblance to that of the Argonautics; and the author not only alludes to Argo and her demi-gods, but seems fond of drawing a comparison between the heroes of Portugal and those of Thessaly. In his fine address to his king Sebastian, he says--

'Here view thine Argonauts, in seas unknown.'

In the perusal of this work, the reader who is well acquainted with Camoëns, will (I am persuaded) readily perceive, that the Lusitanian bard had the Greek perpetually in his view; and that some of the most striking passages in the Lusiad have been directly imitated from the Argonautics.

These are illustrious suffrages to the merit of Apollonius, which I have cited. Yet, for a moment, supposing (contrary to the fact) that his work were a production of inferior force and poetical merit, and even dry and tiresome in the perusal, still

it would be highly interesting, and deserve the utmost regard and attention, as a most precious monument of antiquity; as alluding to many points of ancient history, now enveloped in obscurity; to many records, now swallowed up in the abyss of time. It would deserve to be studied, as a treasury of ancient customs, manners, and religious opinions, rites, and ceremonies; as presenting faithful pictures of the heroic times, and state of society; as reflecting lights on many passages of Homer and other ancient Greek writers; and, affording a clue to correct their text, or elucidate their meaning, it deserves, and must ever engage, the attention of the learned reader.—Apollonius was in possession of all the learning of a learned age. He had before him all the written monuments of antiquity, which were then preserved entire in the admirable library of Alexandria, to which he had constant access. He had also the additional aid of poetical, mythological, and historical tradition, which were handed down to him with unimpaired force and fidelity. These views of society are so many materials for the history of the human mind, which we find in the writings of poets; and, in this point of view, his poem deserves to be perused with care, not only by the poetical reader, the philologer, and the antiquarian, but also by the historian and the moral philosopher; as giving interesting views of society, and pictures of human nature.

It may be asked, at first glance—what true interest ought man to take, in the events which have so long ago passed by him, on the wings of elapsed time, and with which he has not the most remote present connection?—None, surely; did they not

furnish us with materials, on which to build a part of that most delightful and most useful species of science, the knowledge of man. To obtain this knowledge, we should contemplate him through all the relations of which he is capable; and through all the different attitudes, situations, and characters, in which he may be placed; by his greater or lesser progress in civilization, by his passions, the nature of his soul, and the pressure of external circumstances. No occasion should be neglected, of considering man in the various periods;—in that which precedes civilization—in that of nascent civilization—and in that of civilization somewhat advanced, yet still far short of a perfect polish. It is in such views of man, that he may be seen and studied most effectually, as he really is. His mind is then energetic as his frame. His thoughts and feelings are vigorous, and the expression of them unrestrained; he is then unsophisticated, and truly himself. It is this consideration, that renders books of travels, particularly into countries inhabited by savage tribes, particularly valuable and amusing. Such views of society, as I have mentioned, are presented to us in the poems of Homer and of Apollonius Rhodius; and they have, for the moral philosopher, all the value of books of travels.

To readers, who are thoroughly tinctured with the study of classic literature, there is something wonderfully beautiful and engaging in the fine romantic fictions of the Greek mythology. Were it allowable for a writer to speak to the reader respecting his own tastes and propensities, I should say, that for me, they have peculiar charms.

They come over the mind, 'redolent of joy, and youth, and spring;' and united with a thousand collateral recommendations, from the many amiable ideas with which they are associated, and the many fond recollections of long-lost happiness which are excited by them. Indeped ent of their intrinsic beauty, an acquaintance with them leads to the true and perfect understanding of the classic writers of antiquity; writers, which must ever be prized while pure and just taste prevails. Apollonius, therefore, who abounds so much in mythological learning, deserves to be studied, as a writer who reflects a general light on the other Greek classics; since his work is a copious treasury of fabulous history and Grecian mythology. It may also fairly be presumed, that his poem contains many allusions to the writings of antecedent poets, many imitations of their most striking beauties. Thus, he may preserve some memorial of works that have perished.

It has been the fortune of Apollonius Rhodius, to have been illustrated by a scholiast, or rather scholiasts, of singular industry and learning; whose comments are in the highest estimation with the classical reader. In fact, they possess a degree of character, superior to that which marks the labours of the other Greek scholiasts; those of the learned Eustathius on Homer and Dionysius excepted. Nor is this praise capricious or unmerited. They abound in a variety of curious matter—historical particulars, which are not to be found in any other writers—quotations from authors, whose works have wholly perished—and notices of others, whose names are preserved in

this record alone. On these accounts, the scholiasts on Apollonius Rhodius form a most valuable repository, and probably supply the means of correcting and explaining many passages in ancient authors. Their expositions of the text of their original author are, in general, highly luminous and satisfactory, and their remarks often show much taste.

Having said thus much, in vindication of the character and dignity of Apollonius, I shall proceed to say something respecting the labours of his present translator. The Greek *scholia*, on the Argonautics of Apollonius, as they now appear, are supposed to have been the joint work of three persons, Lucillus Tarræus, Sophocles, and Theon. Since these grammarians wrote, our poet has not been much indebted to the labours of critics, editors, or translators. Prior to the publication of the editions of Shaw the Oxford editor, and of Brunk and Beck, copies of this writer were rather scarce; and all the editions of him very exceptionable and unsatisfactory. That of Hælzlinus, in particular, (which, however, is still sought by some book collectors, to complete their sets of *variorum* classics, and, in consequence, bears a price;) is universally exploded by the learned, as one of the most detestable that ever disgraced an ancient author. Nor has the Oxford editor, who is sufficiently severe on Hælzlinus, much cause to boast of his services to Apollonius. In fact, succeeding annotators have added little to the copious and judicious expositions of the Greek *scholia;* except some cursory emendations of the text: among these, Stephens has done the

most. The latest edition of our poet is that by the learned philologer Beck. It is much to be regretted, that he has so long delayed the publication of the notes and illustrations, which should accompany the text and version. It is a particular mortification to the present translator, as he could have wished to consult every work that might promise information, or tend to throw any lights on his author.

As to translations of our author, I shall not dwell particularly on the prose Latin versions, which are not numerous. The earliest metrical version I can find is that, in Latin, which John Baptist Pius, of Bologna, has given (in heroic Latin measure) of the latter part of the Argonautics of Apollonius. It is subjoined to the poem of Valerius Flaccus, which had been left imperfect by its author or mutilated by time, by way of supplement; and entitled 'Ninth and Tenth Books of Valerius Flaccus,' by Pius, in his very rare edition of that poet, printed in the year 1519. The next metrical version is a translation of the entire poem into Latin hexameters, by Valentine Rotmar of Saltsburg, which accompanies an edition of the original text of Apollonius, with the Greek *scholia* annexed, published at Basil, in the year 1572, *ex officinâ Henrici Petrinâ*. I have not been able to discover any very early French or Italian translation of this author. Indeed, I am confident, none such exists[2]. In the English language, Dr. Broome, (who was employed in trans-

[2] Since this Preface was first printed, a French version of Apollonius has appeared.

lating Homer[3]) many years ago, published a translation of the Loves of Medea, and the story of Talus. Mr. West has also presented us with one or two detached pieces from the Argonautics. Mr. Ekins has translated the third book of Apollonius, with about two hundred lines of the fourth. This version appeared in a small volume, in the year 1772, with the title of 'The Loves of Medea and Jason, a poem in three books, translated from the Greek of Apollonius Rhodius.' Two English translations in verse, of the entire work, appeared about twenty years ago; and, what is rather singular, precisely at the same time: the one, by Mr. Edward Burnaby Greene; and the other, (which is more esteemed) begun by Mr. Fawkes, who had before translated Theocritus, and, on his death, completed by a friend, who has not given his name to the public. There are two modern Italian versions; the first, by the well-known Salvini. The latest translation of the Argonautics is that by Cardinal Filangieri; an author well known by his productions on economic subjects, which appeared at Rome; the first volume in the year 1791. It is printed, together with the original Greek text, in two volumes in quarto, with the title of *L'Argonautica di Apollonio Rhodio tradotta ed illustrata.* An ample preface, treating of the fable of the poem, and the design and scope of the author, is prefixed. This translator, while he aims at too scrupulous and exact fidelity, and labours to render all the epithets of his author into Italian, becomes ver-

[3] For Mr. Pope.

bose and enervate, and smothers all the elegance of the original in a mass of words. It frequently happens too, that he mistakes and perverts the sense of his author. There are short notes subjoined, at the bottom of each page; and larger notes thrown together, at the end of each book. In these latter, we are presented with a confused and injudicious mass of good and bad—trite and recondite. There is also a German version, in hexameter verse, by Jo. Jac. Bodmer, printed in octavo, Turici, 1779.—(See *Fabr. Thesau. a Harl.*) Such are the marks of attention which Apollonius has hitherto received from the literary world.

I shall not presume to say, how the English translators of Apollonius, who have gone before me, have succeeded in their task. It would ill become me to speak in degrading terms of those gentlemen, whose taste led them to precede me, in the meritorious province of endeavouring to do justice to this delightful and too-much neglected writer. Their performances are before the public, and it is the privilege of the public to appreciate the labours of writers. It may appear to many, that a new translation of an author who has been twice translated might well be spared: yet, in one point of view, I hope my attempt will appear allowable, and free from the imputation of vanity. Whatever may be the demerits of the present translation, I flatter myself they will find indulgence and pardon from the candid reader, for the sake of the concomitants of which this version is introductory. He will find large extracts from the Greek *scholia*, which deserve to be well known to the classical reader—a variety of

hints, critical, historical, and explanatory; some few of them extracted from those of Fawkes and the Oxford editor, but, for the most part, wholly new; of which some may not be altogether unacceptable, even to those who read Apollonius in the original text.

It is but fair to apprize the reader, with respect to the translation which I now, with much diffidence, offer to his hand, that he will find it, in general, rather paraphrastic than strict; in many places, more redundant than I could wish. I must own, that I have endeavoured to follow rather the spirit than the letter of the original. But I hope I have not been unfaithful to the general sense, to the substance of what the Greek text meant to say. Shall I own it? I sometimes had the vanity of aiming at another sort of translation—a kind of portrait-translation:—a version, not of the matter merely, but of the style and manner of my original. How I may have succeeded in this, alas! I fear—I feel—but the reader, who is capable of comparing the version with the text, must judge for himself:—and, in judging, the test is, if the version reads in English like an original work.

There are two opposite causes, which render the task of translating Apollonius Rhodius highly difficult.——His excellencies, and his defects.—This writer possesses an uncommon sweetness of style, a peculiar delicacy of language, a curious felicity of expression, an undescribable, inimitable grace, and a polished simplicity, which cannot easily be transfused into a version, especially from the Greek, into a language so much its inferior,

as the English. With an elaborate polish of his diction and verse, he joins a richness of fancy, a copiousness and facility of invention, which impart an air of fluency and facility to his writing, of which it is not easy for the translator to exhibit an image. To many, the comparison may, perhaps, appear fanciful and far-fetched; but, in my mind, Apollonius seems to bear a considerable degree of likeness to Ariosto. The same purity and beauty of style and diction, the same harmony of versification, the same fertile invention and abundant display of circumstances, the same glowing tints of colouring, the same apposite force and picturesque beauty of epithet, metaphor, and simile, appear in both. The faults of Apollonius, to which I allude, as rendering him difficult of translation, are the fondness for the antique,(which I have already noticed) and a love of the picturesque; a propensity to graphic illustration, carried sometimes to excess, and producing too much minuteness of description; details of too great exactness and circumstance. There are a variety of arts and manual operations, with their appurtenant technical terms; which, partly from the correspondent mechanical operations, in the present improved state of arts and sciences, being performed in a different manner; partly, from our not having the standard of common use to resort to, for an exposition of the writer's meaning; cannot easily be understood, even by tolerable Greek and Latin scholars. But, suppose this first difficulty removed; ancient terms of art, even if they can be made intelligible, cannot be rendered, with any degree of grace, into a modern language,

where the corresponding terms are debased into vulgarity by low and familiar use. Many passages of this kind are to be found in Homer. They are frequent also in Apollonius Rhodius; particularly so, from the exactness which he affects in describing every thing.

Had I consulted my own judgment, I should have subjoined the Notes incidental to my translation, at the bottom of each page, as I went along. It was the old practice, and I have a great respect for old practices; they are generally reasonable, and founded in convenience. By subjoining the notes, where notes are necessary, at the bottom of the page, much trouble is saved to the reader; and the danger of much misapprehension avoided by the writer. However, the reigning taste of the present day, which seems to consider books rather as things of ornament than use; as matters designed to please the eyes, rather than to inform the understanding; has thought fit to consult the beauty of the page, at the expense of many more important considerations; and, with this view, has consigned the notes to the end of the volume, or to a separate volume. This practice is now so generally established, that it would appear an ungracious affectation of singularity, were I to contend for a disposition generally exploded. With the exception of a very few short ones, I have, therefore, consigned the notes to a separate station, according to the received form of book-making.

Such is the outline of the present work. A consideration, which disposed the author to employ himself in the present translation, may also

induce some readers to bestow a little time on the perusal. This undertaking was commenced in a season of gloom and turbulence, amidst a variety of alarming phantasms and fearful apprehensions. The dismal prospect has in some measure cleared up; yet still the horizon of social sympathy is contracting itself, and blackening into clouds and heavy darkness. Happy is he, who can find within his closet a temporary retreat, from the tumult and the sorrows of the busy crowd; and lose himself in literary amusements and unambitious cares. This is an innocent and moral resource, which does not banish feeling, or unfit the mind for exertion; it is a resource, which is not a satire on the individual who adopts it, or an insult on the sufferings and the apprehensions of the many who suffer around him. The Muses come, like divine comforters, to the restless couch of pain, privation, and despondency:—not with the obtrusive declamation of a vain philosophy; not with the stale professions of consolation, which ever fail of their end; but with soothing variations from painful and immediate cares, with welcome abstractions from importunate and besieging thoughts, with innocent resources and alleviating arts, that insensibly steal us from ourselves. Hard indeed it is, to obtain that respite. The unpleasing sense of what we are, and what we may be, will still recur. The patriotic feelings, that remind us we have a country, become sources of fear. All the dear surrounding pledges, which to the moral man, in times of perfect serenity, are sources of the most pure and virtuous delight, in times of doubt and dismay are armed with poniards, to stab the

feeling heart. But I know, that I shall too frequently have occasion to request the indulgence of my reader. Let me not trespass on his patience, unnecessarily and at the very threshold, by a querulous display of the feelings and forebodings of an individual. Many cannot understand me; and those who can, feel too much already.

The reader, who expects to find, in the poem of Apollonius, any authentic information respecting the state of geography, when he wrote; or to collect thence any true notices of the opinions of the ancients, in his time, on the bearings, distances, and situations of countries then known, will be much disappointed. The whole geographical system of the wanderings of the Argonauts, is completely romantic and fictitious. The curious reader will find the fabulous geography of this expedition diligently explained by a learned writer, named Schoneman, in a work entitled *Commentatio de Geographia Argonautorum, Gottingæ*, 1788. That elegant master of classic learning, Professor Heyne, has also glanced at this subject, in his excellent edition of Apollodorus the Athenian.

As the exploits and travels of the Argonauts were a favourite subject with the ancient poets, the reader may not be displeased to see a short notice of the names of some of their writers, who either have preceded or followed our author, in this high argument. The first place is unquestionably due to Orpheus, one of the first of poets, who accompanied the heroic adventurers; was, like Ossian, at once a warrior and a bard; and sung and celebrated the exploits and the dangers

in which he shared. Orpheus and Musæus were much older than Homer. But the poem on the Argonautic expedition, which still subsists and bears the name of Orpheus, though it affects to speak in the character of that most ancient bard, though it always employs the first person, and talks of the different transactions that passed in the course of the voyage, as if the writer had been an eye-witness, (the bard addressing himself occasionally to Musæus as his son) is really of a date long subsequent to the Argonautic enterprise, and even to the time of Homer; and is known to be the work of an Athenian, named Onomacritus, who lived about the sixtieth, or (according to Clemens Alexandrinus) the fiftieth Olympiad, and was contemporary with Pisistratus. No doubt can be entertained, however, of the existence of such a person as Orpheus. Eusebius in his Chronicon, and Suidas, inform us, that he lived before the Trojan war. Justin Martyr relates, that after he had composed his hymns on the system of polytheism, he travelled into Egypt, and, having learned the true worship of God, from the Hebrews, composed a palinode or recantation. It is certain too, that Musæus, to whom the account of the Argonautic voyage is inscribed, (and whom Orpheus seems to address as his son) is supposed by many (as Pighius relates) to have been no other than the prophet Moses.—See Argonautics of Orpheus, line 306.

'Και τοτε τοι μυσαιε φιλον τεκος.'

That Orpheus visited Egypt, is confirmed by a

passage in the beginning of the poem ascribed to him.

'Μεμφιν ἐς ἠγαθεην πελασας ιερας τε ποληας
Αωιδῳ ἀς περι Νειλῳ αγαρρο ἐσαφανωσαι.'

Other writers, who have treated the same subject with Apollonius, are Antimachus, in his work called Αυδη; *Cleon curiensis*, from whom Asclepiades says Apollonius borrowed many things, and transplanted them into his poem; Epimenides; Eumelius of Corinth; Dionysius of Miletus, or Mitylene; Herodorus, whom also Apollonius is said to have imitated, and who is frequently quoted by the scholiast on our author; Hesiod, if he was really the author of the poem which was entitled *Ægimius*; Pisander, in a work entitled *Theogonia heroica;* Pindar also has given a curious account of the Argonautic expedition, with some circumstances not mentioned elsewhere, in a long digression which he has introduced in his fourth Pythic ode. A Greek poem, on the Argonautic expedition, is to be found in the *Opus Aureum* of Michael Neander, published Lips. 1588. Simonides, the genealogist, also treated this subject, as we are informed.

It was not to be supposed, that such a memorable enterprise, which gave birth to a variety of interesting and romantic events, should have failed of affording subjects to the tragic muse, which, as we find, borrowed so much from the transactions of the Theban and of the Trojan wars. Accordingly, it will appear, that among the dramas of Æschylus, extant or enumerated by ancient writers, are these—Αργω η κωπευσης; Argo, or the

Rower; the Cabiri; the Lemnians; and Hypsipyle, exclusive of other subjects. Most decidedly, these dramas must have been founded on circumstances related in the history of the Argonautic expedition. Euripides composed two plays, at least, on incidents arising in the course of the Argonautic expedition, or in consequence of it; Hypsipyle, and Medea: the latter of which has been preserved, and is among the most beautiful and affecting dramas of this pathetic writer. Sophocles also wrote a play on an incident taken from this enterprise, called Lemnians. We have an epic poem, of considerable length, by Valerius Flaccus, a cotemporary of Quintilian, on the subject of the Argonautic enterprise. This writer (who is by no means destitute of genius and talent) has not scorned to avail himself, as much as he could, of imparted aid, from the poets who preceded him. In his style and diction he has imitated Virgil, and with some success. In the particular incidents, as well as in the general plan of his poem, he has closely followed Apollonius, and imitated (indeed I might almost say translated) many passages from his Greek predecessor. Sometimes, however, he had the vanity to think of breaking a lance with Apollonius, and of improving on his great original; and, perhaps, his poem is so much the worse for these attempts. For instance, Apollonius makes Acastus, the son of the jealous and insidious Pelias, full of all the fire and gallantry of ingenuous youth, frankly and freely, and contrary to the expectation of the Argonauts, follow Jason, notwithstanding the enmity of his father to the young hero. This is a most engaging and interest-

ing picture. Valerius Flaccus deprives Acastus of the praise of generosity and courage, and degrades the character of Jason, his hero, by an imputation of mean artifice and deliberate malice: for he makes the leader prevail on his companion to join him, by earnest solicitations, and, in some measure, to trepan him on board; and he ascribes the anxiety of Jason, to enrol Acastus among his followers, not to friendship, or a real wish for his assistance, so much, as to a principle of revenge and malice, a desire of wounding the heart and paternal feelings of Pelias, by drawing the son to share the dangers of the perilous voyage ordained by the father.

Lucius Attius, or Accius, an early Roman tragic poet, produced a play, the subject of which was furnished by the Argonautic expedition. A fragment of this drama is preserved: it is a speech, supposed to be spoken by a shepherd, who first descried the ship Argo.

Tanta moles labitur
Tremebunda ex alto, ingenti sonitu et spiritu
Præ se undas volvit, vortices vi suscitat,
Ruit prolapsa pelagus respergit reflat
Ita dum interruptum credas nimbum volvier
Dum quid sublime ventis expulsum rapi
Saxum aut procellis, vel globosos turbines
Existere ictos undis concursantibus
Nisi quas terrestres strages conciet
Aut forte Triton fuscinâ evertens specus
Subter radices penitus undanti in freto.
Molem et profundo saxeam ad cœlum vomit.

Ovid has introduced this subject in his Metamorphoses, and written a tragedy on the story of Medea.

There is a long Italian epic poem, on the subject of the Argonautic expedition, which is entitled *La Giasoneide o sia la Conquista del Vello d'Oro Poema Epico di dieci Canti con le Annotazioni a ciascuno di essi.* It is written by L'Abbate Ubaldo Mari, and dedicated to the great Frederic of Prussia. The copy, which I have seen, was printed at Leghorn, 1780; and, probably, there may never be another edition. The author has thought it necessary to prefix the following protest:

Protesta. '*Sono scherzi poetici soltanto, e non sentimenti veri dell' autore, l'espressioni tutte di questo poema, tratte della teologia de Pagani.*' I owe the knowledge of this work to my worthy and ingenious friend, Mr. Cooper Walker [4], whose taste and attention to Italian literature are not unknown to the public, and whose politeness and obliging temper are felt and esteemed by all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance.

This author follows a course of his own, and has not much in common with Apollonius or Valerius Flaccus. Had I not already trespassed so much on the patience of the reader, in this Preface, I should be tempted to give an analysis of the strange poem in question.

Exclusive of different modern plays on the story of Medea, and of mere historical works in different languages, I believe I have now enumerated all the different performances, to which a subject

4 Of St. Valeri, near Dublin; an amiable and accomplished scholar, whose lamented death took place on the 12th of April, 1810.

has been furnished by the voyages and adventures of the Argonauts. Other particulars, respecting this interesting theme, the writers who have treated it, and Apollonius Rhodius in particular, will be found in the course of the notes which accompany the present translation. And now that I am led to mention the notes, which form a part of this work, I must entreat the indulgence of the candid reader; and beg leave to remind him, that it is not easy to hit the exact medium of the public taste in the department of notes. To many, I shall appear, perhaps, to have darkened my author with illustration; to many, my notes may appear trite and unnecessary; to many more, far-fetched and pedantic; and both censures may, probably, be well-founded. The difficulty of satisfying all readers, and an anxiety to elucidate (as well as my poor resources would allow me) the sense of my author, are all I can allege in my behalf.

THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

INVOCATION.—Subject proposed.—Jealousy of Pelias excited by an oracle.—Chance points out Jason as the object.—Pelias determines to rid himself of Jason, by sending for the golden fleece.—Catalogue of heroes who engaged in the enterprise.—Procession through the city to the shore.—Reflections of the people as they pass; of the women in particular.—Deplorable state of Jason's father.—Grief of his mother.—He endeavours to comfort them.—Pathetic address of Alcimede his mother.—Jason's reply.—He hastes to join his associates; meets by the way Iphias, priestess of Diana.—They are separated by the crowd.—Acastus, son of Pelias, unexpectedly joins the Argonauts, accompanied by Argus.—Address of Jason to the band.—He proposes that they should choose a leader.—All cast their eyes on Hercules.—He refuses the honour, and proposes Jason.—He being chosen, commences by directing his followers to propitiate, by sacrifice, Phœbus, the adviser of the enterprise.—The heroes launch the ship Argo, and assign the different stations at the oars by

lot.—An altar erected on the shore to Phœbus, who presides over embarkations.—Prayer of Jason.—Sacrifice described.—A feast succeeds.—Prediction of Idmon.—Petulance of Idas.—A quarrel.—The tumult composed by Orpheus.—Adventurers clear out of the bay of Pagasæ.—Prodigy.—The Argo speaks.—The gods look down on the Argonauts and their vessel.—The nymphs appear on the tops of the hills to view this strange object.—Chiron appears with his wife, who bears the young Achilles in her arms, and shows him to Peleus.—The Argonauts arrive at Lemnos.—Episode of the Lemnian women.—Hypsipile, their queen, holds a council.—Argonauts invited ashore.—Mantle of Jason described.—Artful speech of Hypsipile.—Hypsipile takes a pathetic leave of Jason.—The Argonauts leave Lemnos.—Arrive at the Propontis.—They are hospitably received by Cyzicus.—Jason, with some of his companions, ascends mount Dindymus.—Hercules, with a small party, is left to take care of the ship.—They are attacked by the barbarians, but defeat them.—The Argonauts set sail; but are driven back in the night by adverse winds.—Cyzicus and his people mistake them for enemies.—A violent conflict ensues.—Cyzicus slain.—His wife kills herself.—Grief of both parties.—Funeral rites of the prince.—Jason, by the direction of Mopsus, repairs to mount Dindymus, to propitiate Cybele.—The winds become favourable.—They reach Mysia.—Hercules, plying his oar with too much force, breaks it.—He goes to look for a new one; meantime, Hylas, his favourite, is snatched away by the nymphs.—Polyphemus hears the cries of the youth, and goes out, in hope of assisting him.—He meets Hercules.—They pursue the search together; meantime, the vessel sails away.—Argonauts discover their loss in the morning.—Their grief and contusion.—Sorrow of Jason.—They wish to return and seek for the heroes.—Are prevented by Calais and Zetes.—Rage of Telamon.—He accuses Jason of having left Hercules behind through envy.—Glaucus appears from the waves, and foretels the fortunes of the Argonauts, and of Hercules and Polyphemus.—Strife appeased.—Hercules and his friend continue their search for Hylas, but in vain.—The Argonauts arrive at Bebrycia, the country of Amycus.

PARENT of sacred song! inform the rhymes;
Record the glorious men of other times,
Whose daring oars the vessel first impell'd,
And through the' astonish'd deeps their voyage held;
With search adventurous on the Colchian shore,
To win the fleece replete with golden ore.
For Pelias, with insidious dark command,
To tasks of dangerous daring urg'd the band.
The' obscure prediction wak'd his jealous hate,
With doubtful warnings of untimely fate:
'A youth unshod amid the crowd appears,
Cause of thy ruin, subject of thy fears.'
Object of terror accident supplied,
To point suspicions, that had wander'd wide.
The hallow'd banquet was to Neptune giv'n,
And all the' immortal habitants of heav'n,
Save one: with bold contempt, the wife of Jove
Selected seem'd, the' irreverent slight to prove.
To join the festive rites, with eager haste,
As youthful Jason o'er Anaurus pass'd [1],
His sandal swallow'd by the' impetuous flood,
Unshod before the king the stripling stood.
By superstition fill'd with dire alarms,
He dooms the' imagin'd foe to mortal harms;
To toils unknown, amid the billows' roar;
And endless wanderings on a distant shore.
'Tis sung, that Argus, by Minerva taught,
The first of ships, a wondrous fabric, wrought.
With added memory, let the Muse unfold,
What lives recorded through the years of old,

[1] A stream of Thessaly, according to some; according to others, a general name for any torrent.

The names and lineage of the godlike train,
Their weary wanderings o'er the trackless main;
Illustrious Spirits, prov'd from clime to clime,
In deeds that reach the heights of fame sublime.
Presiding Muses of historic song,
Recount the leaders of the daring throng.
A bard divine the brave associates led,
Whose tuneful soul the thirst of glory fed.
Sweet Orpheus, by the parent Muse inspir'd;
A youth of Thrace her heavenly bosom fir'd,
Near Pimple's [2] towering rock to him she bore
The mighty master of poetic lore.
The massy stones his magic song obey'd;
The torrents in their headlong fall were stay'd;
Pieria's beeches heard the measures flow,
And left their mountain for the vale below:
There, listening captives of his tuneful hand,
In order rang'd the green memorials stand.
Him, warn'd by Chiron, Æson's noble heir,
To join his labours and partake his care,
Call'd from Pieria, where he reign'd secure,
And glory's charms the martial bard allure.
Next came Asterion, from Cometes sprung,
With whirlpools boiling, and with woods o'erhung,
Where rolls Apidanus [3], in torrent force,
And bids Enipeus [3] join his swelling course:
The youthful hero left his native bow'rs,
Where cloth'd in shades the tall Phylleium tow'rs [4].
Then, lur'd by fame to fly where danger calls,
Brave Polyphemus quits Larissa's walls [5]:

[2] A district of Pieria, where was a mountain and village.

[3] Apidanus—Enipeus, rivers of Thessaly.

[4] A mountain of Macedonia.

[5] A city of Thessaly. This Polyphemus of Elatus must not be confounded with Polyphemus the Cyclops.

No stranger he to hardy feat of arms;
His early youth was given to rude alarms,
When Centaurs brav'd the Lapithæ[6] to fight;
But creeping age had now relax'd his might:
Yet still the' undaunted fire of youth remain'd,
And mental energy the frame sustain'd.
Nor Phylace, with all the charms of home,
Forbade the gallant Iphiclus to roam;
Attach'd to kindred, and alive to fame,
To share his nephew's glorious toils he came.
Affection's band the god of marriage tied,
And made his beauteous sister Æson's bride.
From Pheræ[7], rich in many a snowy flock,
Where beacon-like the Chalcodonian rock,
With head sublime, o'erlooks the subject plain,
Its chief, Admetus, joins the' adventurous train.
The sons of Hermes, skill'd in many a wile,
In warfare nurtur'd, and enrich'd by spoil,
From Alopé, at golden hope's command,
Echion joins, with Eurytus, the band.
Them the fair daughter of Menætius bore;
Their brother shares their journey to the shore,
Ethalides[8], whom a Thessalian dame,
The beauteous offspring of a stealthy flame,
Bore to the winged messenger of Jove;
Amphrysus' banks were witness of their love.
From wealthy Gyrton[9], with the band enroll'd,
Coronus came, in martial prowess bold.

[6] So called from Lapithes, son of Apollo and Stilbé.

[7] A town of Thessaly.

[8] This, says the scholiast, is a proper name, though it bears the form of a patronymic.

[9] A city of Thessaly or Perœbia.

Yet scarce he reach'd his father's warlike name,
Undaunted Ceneus, darling child of fame.
When Centaur hosts that matchless chief assail'd,
O'er crowding foes his single might prevail'd;
Dire was the conflict, horrible their ire,
Unmov'd, intrepid, scorning to retire,
With mind unbroken, and unwearied hands,
Hurling defiance the fierce warrior stands;
The baffled foes resort to missive war,
And fill the groaning air with weights from far,
The darted pine, and oak's enormous trunk;
Crush'd into earth, yet unsubdued, he sunk.
Next Mopsus came, of Titaresian line,
Supremely skill'd to read the will divine
In voice and flight of tribes that wing the sky,
For Phœbus gave the powers of augury.
Polydamas attractive glory leads,
Where Xenias wide his stagnant mirror spreads;
The son of Ctimenus renown'd of yore;
The father's name his native city bore.
Then Actor sends his young Menætius forth,
From noble chiefs to learn heroic worth.
With him were join'd, companions brave and young,
Eurytion bold and Eribotes strong.
His birth to Teleon Eribotes ow'd.
Old Actor's blood, a generous current, flow'd
To warm Eurytion's breast, with dawning fire,
For, sprung from Actor, Irus was his sire.
Oïleus came, intrepid in the field,
Swift in pursuit, when flying squadrons yield.
And hapless Canthus from Eubœa came,
His sire Canethus fann'd the' adventurous flame,

In evil hour; for, to return no more,
He roam'd with Jason from his native shore,
Ordain'd to perish on a distant land,
With Mopsus wandering o'er the Libyan strand.
O wretched man, how transient is thy breath,
Inevitably doom'd to pain and death!
On Libya's burning sands their tombs remain
A scene, far distant from the Colchian plain,
As the gay seats of Phœbus' dawning light,
From the pale precincts of approaching night.
Clytius and Iphitus the call obey,
And leave Æchalia their paternal sway,
The seat of Eurytus, whom Phœbus taught
To bend the bow, with aim unerring fraught.
Relentless man, with impious rage he burn'd,
And gifts divine against the donor turn'd.
The sons of Æacus augment the band;
Not jointly they, nor from a common land;
By conscious terrors from Ægina driv'n,
They fled the vengeful wrath of earth and heav'n.
Through fell mischance, in flower of youthful pride,
Beneath their hands their brother Phocus died.
The' Athenian isle [10] bold Telamon possess'd,
In Thié Peleus found a place of rest.
The valiant Butes from Cecropia [11] came,
Brave Teleon's offspring. With congenial flame
Phalerus join'd him, skilful at the spear,
Child of his age, to hoary Alcon dear.
No selfish thoughts the father's mind engage,
The sole support of his declining age

[10] Salamis.——So Homer:

Ajax from Salamis twelve vessels brought,
And rang'd his troops where the Athenians fought.

[11] Attica.

He sends, the pride of weary life's decline,
With noble chiefs, in hardy deeds to shine.
But Theseus, who in glorious acts excell'd
Erectheus' sons, no more the light beheld.
Victim of friendship, in the Stygian gloom
He mourn'd in chains his lov'd companion's doom.
Lamented chance, for Jason's daring host
A mighty succour by his absence lost!
The son of Agnias, from the Thespian plain,
No mean assistant, Tiphys join'd the train,
Supremely skill'd, with prescient eye to mark
The perils that await the lab'ring bark,
When howling tempests shall the billows sweep,
And watery mountains rise amid the deep,
The solar path, and the presaging star.
Minerva led him to the band from far;
The band receive him with a shout of joy,
And soon their toils his wondrous gifts employ,
Alector's [12] son inspir'd by Pallas wrought,
And fram'd the vessel, as the goddess taught.
Divinely form'd, that first of ships surpass'd
All vessels that have plough'd the briny waste.
Possess'd of all that mortals can desire,
Cheer'd with the love of his Lenæan sire [13],
From Aræthyrea wealthy Phlias came,
For glory touch'd him with her sacred flame.
He left his mansion, where Asopus flows,
To share in perils, and encounter woes.
Two Argive youths increase the gallant throng,
The daring Talaus, and Areius strong,

[12] In some copies it is Arestorides, but the true reading is Alectorides; Argus, son of Arestor, was prior to the Argonauts.

[13] Bacchus.

With stout Laodocus, whom Pero bore,
Daughter of Neleus, and the cause of yore,
That brave Melampus mix'd in deeds of spoil,
Source of his danger, object of his toil.
Nor mighty Hercules the call declin'd,
While glory's charms inflam'd the daring mind.
Soon as he heard (for the report was loud)
The purpos'd voyage, and the' assembled crowd,
When late he left Arcadia's wild domain,
And pass'd to Argos, seat of Lynceus' reign,
He bore the savage from the tangled brakes,
Lampeeia's [14] woods, and Erymanthian lakes.
Mycænæ's forests trembled at the view,
When to the ground the captive boar he threw.
Spontaneous he augments the glorious band,
Nor seeks a licence from Eurystheus' hand.
With him went Hylas in the bloom of youth,
Who felt with ardour, and repaid with truth,
(Guard of his quiver, bearer of his bow,)
All the fond cares his master [15] could bestow.
Then Nauplius came, of ancient Danaus' line,
A mortal mother, and a sire divine.
From him [16], whose trident shakes the solid earth
And Amymoné, Nauplius [17] took his birth.
From him we find the' heroic race extend,
And Prætus, Lernus, Nauplius descend.
The last on Clytonæus life bestow'd,
To him his being younger Nauplius ow'd.
A gallant spirit, dauntless Idmon, came,
Of Argives last, but not the least in fame,

[14] Lampeeia, a mountain of Arcadia, from whence the river Erymanthus flows. [15] Hercules.

[16] Neptune. [17] See notes at the end.

For, skill'd in augury, he read his doom,
And sought, with heart resolv'd, the' untimely tomb.
Reputed son of Abas, but his sire
The god of day bestow'd prophetic fire,
What burning entrails teach he bade him read,
What signs from voice and flight of birds proceed.
From Sparta next, the bold attempt to share,
Ætolian Leda sends the' illustrious pair,
Pollux, in combats of the cestus crown'd,
And Castor, for the manag'd steed renown'd,
Dear as the pledges of declining age,
Darlings and toys, that closing life engage,
A double birth from Tyndarus and Jove,
Produce of mortal and immortal love.
No woman's fears, that feeble minds enthral,
No weak despondence would the youths recal;
In Jove confiding, and the valiant heart,
She sees, without a sigh, her sons depart,
Thine offspring, Apharetus, Lynceus bold,
And haughty Idas, next their names enroll'd.
Arene [18] sends them. Wondrous was the pow'r
Bestow'd on Lynceus at his natal hour.
His darted glance, so fable sings, could pierce
The darkling centre of this universe.
Next, Peryclimenus, to join the train,
First-born of Neleus, quits the Pylian plain.
Him ocean's god, endow'd with boundless might,
And, not less useful in the deadly fight,
He gave him pow'r, amid the hurtling storm,
To choose his shape, and wish away his form.
Amphidamus and Cepheus left the seat
Of rural pleasures, for the warlike feat,

[18] A city of Peloponnesus near Pylus.

Arcadia, bless'd abode of shepherd loves,
Apheidas' happy realm, and Tegea's [19] groves.
The young Ancæus [20] on their steps attends,
The gallant boy his sire Lycurgus sends,
Sprung from one father, the paternal tie
Bids him entrust them with his progeny,
He too had follow'd, but their drooping sire,
The hoary Aleus, checks the fond desire.
In early manhood beauteously severe,
Clad in the spoils of the Mænalian [21] bear,
Intrepid boy, Ancæus joins the band,
And shakes a battle-axe with nervous hand;
For aged Aleus, full of fond alarms,
With pious artifice conceal'd his arms.
Augeas came, to whom the fabled lay
Gave for a sire the' illustrious god of day.
He rul'd in Elis with imperial pride,
For vast his wealth, and his dominions wide;
Much he desir'd to reach the Colchian shore,
And meet Aetes, who the sceptre bore.
Two gallant sons from Hyparesius sprung,
Asterius and Amphion, bold and young,
Achaian striplings, from Pellene [22] came,
The city bore their grandsire Pelias' name.
Its walls he rais'd beneath the' o'erhanging steep,
Where towering cliffs protect the glassy deep.
The son of Neptune by a mortal dame
From Tænarus the swift Euphemus came.

[19] Tegea, a city of Arcadia.

[20] There were two of the name in the expedition.

[21] Mænalus, a mountain of Arcadia; there was also a city of the same name.

[22] Pellene, a city of Achæa. Pallene, a city of Arcadia.

Europa fair from Tityos claim'd her birth,
From Tityos doom'd to pangs in depths of earth,
This beauteous offspring she to Neptune gave,
Endow'd with swiftness from the kindred wave,
O'er rapid waters, o'er the hoary deep
Swift, swift as winds the steps aerial sweep,
Nor dip'd their traces in the wat'ry vast,
As scarcely felt the humid path he pass'd.
Two other chiefs, that birth from Neptune drew,
Gave added lustre to the noble crew:
Far-fam'd Miletus bold Erginus sent,
His steps from Samos fierce Ancæus bent,
Far from Parthenian Imbrasus he rov'd,
And hallow'd banks by virgin Juno [23] lov'd,
Both train'd in warfare, skilful both to guide
The labouring vessel through the foamy tide.
From Calydon Ænides join'd the throng,
Bold Meleager darling of the song.
To check the sallies of presumptuous youth,
To guide his paths in fortitude and truth,
A father's cares with him Laocoön send,
Mature in age, the parent and the friend;
For Æneus' sire, by roving fancy led,
Had call'd a menial female to his bed,
Yet, though connected by a spurious tie,
Fondly he view'd his brother's progeny.
To manly feats his dawning youth he train'd;
And longer had the' illustrious boy remain'd,
Form'd by such precepts, his expanded fame
Had reach'd the glories of Alcides' name.
The son of Thestias, Iphiclus, was there,
Skill'd in the dart, and combats of the spear,

[23] Frequented by Juno before her marriage with Jupiter.

Althea's brother, ties of kindred join'd,
And more effectual the congenial mind,
To bid him choose, through danger and renown,
To make the youth's eventful lot his own.
Next Palæmonius caught the generous fire,
Olenian Lernus [24] was the hero's sire.
Reputed sire; to Vulcan birth he ow'd;
His halting gait the genuine father show'd.
That blemish in his form might malice find,
None in his actions and his godlike mind.
From Phocis, dear to the prophetic god [25],
Seats where his grandsire Ornytus abode,
The youthful son of Naubolus appear'd,
Where fame and Jason the bright banners rear'd;
Bold Iphitus, whom ties of kindred mind
And bands religious with the hero join'd;
For at his hospitable board, the bowl,
And genial rites had pledg'd the mutual soul,
When Æson's son repair'd to Delphi's shrine,
Guide of his course, to learn the will divine;
Calais and Zetes, the wing'd brothers came,
Offspring of Boreas, by a mortal dame.
Her mid her equals, as the beauteous maid,
Erectheus' daughter, Orithyia play'd,
The stormy god beheld with wild desire;
Far from her native land and weeping sire,
Far from her lov'd Cecropia's sunny hills,
Flowers of Hymettus, cool Ilyssus' rills,
The shrieking maid the tyrant lover bore,
To Thracian wilds, where winds eternal roar,
Where drifted snows o'erwhelm the distant plains,
And winter scowls, and desolation reigns,

[24] Olenus was a place in Achæa.
[25] Apollo, on account of the oracle of Delphi.

Where rifted rocks, in frightful crags arise,
And foggy damps involve the' inclement skies.
Around his bride impervious clouds he spread,
And mists and vapours were their nuptial bed.
An airy pinion from each heel display'd
O'er their light footsteps cast a plumy shade,
Sky-tinctur'd pinions, wondrous to behold,
Transparent plumage all bedrop'd with gold;
And on their shoulders mantling broad behind
Their raven tresses wanton'd with the wind.
Nor did Acastus, fill'd with youthful fire,
Partake the feelings of his jealous sire,
The sire, for Jason spreads the mortal snare,
The son resolves his enterprise to share.
Charm'd with the subjects of a father's hate,
He loves their dangers, and pursues their fate.
Last Argus, priest of Pallas, quits the fane
Of wisdom's goddess, for the stormy main.
  These bold companions Jason rous'd to fame,
The region call'd them by one common name,
The' adventurous MINYÆ; for of Minyas' blood,
The chief in numbers and in prowess stood.
Minyas, whose daughters, in illustrious line,
Were wives and parents of a race divine.
Nor did thy charms or progeny disgrace,
Fair Clymene, the glories of that race.
Alcimede surpass'd her mother's charms,
And Jason fill'd her fond maternal arms.
  Now had their slaves prepar'd with careful hand,
For ease and safety of the' adventurous band,
Whate'er in ships is hoarded, for the train
That purpose weary wand'rings o'er the main.
Then, through the streets, with calm undaunted pace,
In solemn order, mov'd the godlike race,

And sought the strand renown'd in future fame,
Magnesian Pagasæ [26], illustrious name.
They pass'd, distinguish'd, through the black'ning crowd,
Like stars resplendent 'mid the dusky cloud.
Emotions mingled, wonder, pity, love,
Fill the spectators, as the heroes move.
As the big tear stood trembling in each eye,
One would indignant to his neighbour cry,
'Ye Gods, what demon Pelias' heart can sway,
And bid him chase heroic worth away?
Oh blindly tyrannous the lust of gain,
That dooms to banishment this gallant train,
The prime and flower of universal Greece,
Through savage climes to seek the fatal fleece!
Yet safely may the glorious band return,
Proud of the fleecy gold in triumph borne!
The treasure freely let Æëtes yield,
Or force extort it in the sanguine field;
Let flames devouring on his palace prey,
While our brave Greeks pursue their joyful way!
But no; the prospect lowers, a dismal gloom,
Unfruitful labours, and a wat'ry tomb.'
Meantime, the softer sex, with hands and eyes
Uprais'd, implor'd each native of the skies,
'On every youthful head a blessing send,
And grant their wand'rings a propitious end!'
Each to her neighbour turning, would complain,
As passion dictated the mournful strain:
'What sorrows sad Alcimede await!
What sudden clouds o'ercast her shining fate!
And hapless Æson—better had the gloom
Of death unconscious borne thee to the tomb,

[26] A promontory of Magnesia, which was a part of Thessaly.

Than childless, hopeless in thy life's decline,
To think despairing, such a son was mine.'
O Phryxus, why wert thou preserv'd to weep
A sister whelm'd beneath the stormy deep?
Oh that the fleece, portentous cause of woe,
Had sunk for ever in the depths below,
Nor bestial organs inauspicious found
The force articulate of human sound.
Hence, hence, Alcimede, thy bitter tears,
The sorrows hence that aged Æson bears.'
The first appearance of the godlike crew
Such plaints as these from many a female drew:
Round the domestics male and female crowd,
They gaz'd a parting look, they wept aloud:
The mother came, transfix'd with sorrow's dart,
She clasp'd her son—she strain'd him to her heart:
O'erwhelm'd with sorrows, and in life's decay,
Sunk on his couch the wretched father lay;
In many a fold he wrapp'd his aged head,
Existence loathing, from the light he fled;
And sought from ev'ry eye to veil the grief
Too big for tears, impatient of relief.
His parent's anguish pious Jason cheer'd;
Hope fill'd his words, and on his brow appear'd:
Around his neck while yet his parents hung,
He calls for armour to th' attendant throng;
Th' attendant throng his radiant arms prepare,
With downcast eyes, in silence of despair.
As first around him her white arms she threw,
His mother clasp'd him still; the briny dew
Moisten'd his cheek—for like a girl she weeps,
When to her old indulgent nurse she creeps
Neglected, helpless, full of infant fear,
Aw'd by a cruel stepdame's brow severe.

Victim of tyranny, she drags on life
The mark of stern reproach and endless strife,
Despairing, with a weight of woes oppress'd,
Scarce her heart flutters in her little breast.
Tears and short sobbings burst to her relief,
A solace scarce indulg'd by timid grief,
Round that sole friend her little arms are spread,
That aged bosom hides her little head.
Thus, with affection fill'd, and soft alarms,
Around her son the mother throws her arms.
And, oh what piteous sounds her griefs impart,
Close as she strains him to her throbbing heart!
'Ah wretched, had I sought the shades below,
When Pelias' tongue announc'd the doom of woe!
Then had my soul escap'd this deadly wound,
Then had my cares a long oblivion found;
My spirit from those arms had sought the skies;
Those darling hands had clos'd my swimming eyes;
Funereal rites thy precious love had paid,
And filial duty sooth'd my parted shade;
Sole tribute I could claim from him I lov'd,
Where hourly acts thy gratitude had prov'd;
Sole testimony that remain'd thine own,
All other proofs already have been shown.
I feel them here a sad delight impart;
They live, they throb, they flutter at my heart.
My hope, my pride, by thee thy mother claims
Reverence and wonder from the Grecian dames.
Now like a menial in my palace left,
Weak and despis'd, of my protector reft,
I brood o'er blessings that no more are mine,
And waste in tears my weary life's decline.
My hopes, my joys, were plac'd in thee alone,
Since nuptial Juno loos'd my virgin zone,

And first and last for thee the goddess came,
Sov'reign of pangs that give the mother's name.
In one completely bless'd, I ne'er repin'd,
That Heav'n to one a mother's cares confin'd;
My ev'ry wish you claim'd entire and whole,
And left no void within a mother's soul.
O fatal change of unsuspected dread,
Not ev'n in dreams foreshown! when Phryxus fled,
Could prescience, from his passage o'er the wave,
Trace the wild pangs that bid the mother rave.'
Meantime, her female train in cadence mourn,
Sigh as she sighs, and tear for tear return.
Her son, with words of soft condoling pow'r,
Calm'd the distraction of the parting hour;
'Ah why this heart with sad forebodings thrill?
Can tears and cries avert the destin'd ill?
Grief thus indulg'd but aggravates the woe,
Inevitable doom of man below.
Dark, doubtful ills besiege our wretched kind;
Shrink not from suff'rings by the gods assign'd;
Upward to Pallas look for aid divine,
Recal those oracles from Phebus' shrine,
Fair and propitious. View the gallant train,
That wait to join my wand'rings o'er the main;
Let these thy heart with confidence inspire;
Hence with the virgins of thy train retire,
Conceal thy grief at home. Forbear to glide,
A bird ill-omen'd, as we seek the tide.
The menial band shall farewel duties pay,
And speed the vessel on her wat'ry way.'
He ceas'd, and rushing from the door in haste,
With grace majestic to the harbour pass'd.
Thus from his fane, where fragrant vapours play
In curling clouds, descends the god of day.

Delos he seeks, or Claros [27], lov'd retreat,
Or hallow'd Delphi, his prophetic seat;
Or views delighted Lycian Xanthus roll'd
Through spacious meadows, and o'er sands of gold.
Such Jason pass'd along. The' admiring crowd
Pursued his steps with acclamations loud.
An aged priestess from Diana's shrine,
Guardian of cities, meets the youth divine,
Iphias rever'd; with pious lips she press'd
The hero's hand, and accents had address'd
Of solemn import, but the hurried throng
Rush'd like a flood, and swept the youth along.
In the rude conflict from each other torn
The priestess and the youth were diverse borne.
Stunn'd by the shock, unaided by the train,
Feebly she sunk, half-leaning o'er the plain.
Now Jason passing to the shore had trac'd
The crowded streets with lofty structures grac'd:
His comrades there, attendant on the strand,
In order rang'd beside their vessel stand.
A deep attention through their ranks prevail'd;
He paus'd, he stood, and shouts his presence hail'd.
But distant now Acastus they descried
The city leaving, Argus at his side.
As to the shore, with eager steps they press'd,
Wonder and joy pervaded every breast;
And all applaud, while scorning Pelias' wrath,
Advent'rous virtue guides their glorious path,
Descending to his feet, of sable hue,
A bull's large hide the valiant Argus threw
O'er his broad shoulders. His companion wears
A splendid mantle. In the web appears,

[27] A city of Asia Minor, near Colophon.

(The gift, the labour of a sister's hand)
How well her art the shuttle could command.
From questions multiplied the chief[28] forbore,
And bade them[29] join th' assembly on the shore.
On the furl'd sails, and masts, that lay around,
Commodious seats the throng'd assembly found.
With courteous act, his gentle words confess'd
The public care that reign'd within his breast.
'All preparations for the wat'ry way
That ships require, or sailors can delay,
Are now complete; a single pause prevails,
Till winds propitious fill the swelling sails.
One course, my friends, and common toils we know,
May guardian gods a joint return bestow!
Elect a chief, this object to secure,
And be the choice from selfish motives pure.
Let him, who boasts superior worth, preside,
And peace or war with steady councils guide.'
He ceas'd—instinctive all, without debate,
Gaz'd on the centre, where Alcides sate,
As with one tongue, unanimous the band
Invest that hero with supreme command.
In vain—for from his seat the godlike man
His right hand wav'd, and to the crowd began:
'Let none adorn me with a leader's name,
I will not trench upon another's fame:
Glorious it is to lead such gallant throngs;
I see to whom that honour'd task belongs.
The palm another has deserv'd to bear,
I will not wear it, nor shall rivals wear.
The man whose summons calls us to the main,
Is justly chief of this advent'rous train.'

[28] Jason. [29] Acastus and Argus.

Thus he, with innate nobleness of mind,
And gen'rous pride, the proffer'd rank declin'd;
Peals of applause th' assenting crowd bestows,
Again, with heart elate, bold Jason rose.
In graceful act, as he the crowd address'd,
Joy flush'd his cheek, and brighten'd on his crest.
'O may my conduct justify the choice,
That gives this honour'd trust by public voice.
My first command—no more delay—prepare:
Let pious rites of sacrifice and pray'r
The god of day propitiate: then provide
A plenteous banquet near the vessel's side.
The care on me devolves to find the beast,
Worthy to bleed for sacrifice and feast.
But while my servants, that the stalls attend,
Selected from the herds the fairest send,
Launch we the ship, embark the warlike stores,
And mark by lot the stations at our oars.
Then raise an altar near the foamy tides,
To him [30] that o'er th' embarking train presides,
Who yields to mariners his timely aid,
To whom the vows on winding shores are paid.
Safe on her course our vessel he shall send,
Guide with his counsels, and from storms defend;
And won by prayers, to happy issue bring
Our dangerous conflict with the Colchian king.'
He spake, and to th' appointed labour flew,
And all th' example of their chief pursue.
They rose, and cast their garments in a heap,
On a broad rock unmoisten'd by the deep,
Save when the tempests, that in winter rave,
O'er the dark summits dash'd the briny wave.

[30] *Phebus Embasius*, so called from a Greek word that signifies to embark.

As Argus bids, with force conjoin'd they urge
The groaning vessel to the swelling surge;
Well twisted ropes around her side they pass'd,
Where pins of iron held the timbers fast,
The straining bark in her descent to guide,
And keep her steady in the rolling tide.
Then, deep and spacious, opening from the land,
Before the ship they dig away the sand,
Far as the bark lay distant on the shore,
And near the main it deepen'd more and more
With gradual slope, and in the trench they laid
Round polish'd rollers, the descent to aid.
Supported thus the ship inclining stood,
Dispos'd with sliding march to gain the flood.
Tied to the banks, th' inverted oars they place,
Projecting o'er the ship a cubit's space.
Marshal'd between alternate stood the band,
Prepar'd with force conjoin'd of breast and hand.
Within the vessel station'd to direct
Combin'd in time, and powerful in effect,
Their joint exertions, Tiphys sate on high,
And gave the signal with commanding cry.
All to the task with force incumbent close,
Th' incumbent force the yielding vessel knows.
As each with feet infix'd, and lab'ring breast,
His weight applied, and on the vessel press'd,
She quits her bedded seat, and moves along,
To shouts symphonious of the rushing throng.
The vast slow-gliding mass the rollers feel,
And loudly creak beneath the ponderous keel.
The dust in sable volumes rose around,
As trampling footsteps shook the solid ground.
When now the vessel, with augmenting force,
Had reach'd the sea, they check'd her headlong course,

With backward effort. Then, their oars they brac'd,
And each suspended in its station plac'd.
With masts and stores the vessel they supply,
And canvass destin'd soon to flout the breezy sky.
  Now had their active diligence on board
All due provision for a voyage stor'd;
When perfect readiness confess'd their cares,
Th' impartial lot the rowers plac'd in pairs.
But great Alcides, without lot, possess'd
A chosen seat distinguish'd from the rest.
Him to the central place the heroes call,
With strong Ancæus, sent from Tegeä's wall.
A kindred impulse in the general mind
To Tiphys' hand the guiding helm assign'd.
  Now for an altar they collect the stone
Worn by the billows, and with moss o'ergrown.
A structure rude was soon to Phebus rear'd,
Guardian of mariners, on shores rever'd.
Their arid boughs the neighb'ring olives lend,
To bid the pyre of sacrifice ascend.
From Jason's stalls the herdsmen now arrive;
Two chosen steers for sacrifice they drive:
These the more youthful of the gallant crew,
Reluctant, bellowing, toward the altar drew;
Others the bowl and salted cakes prepare;
To guardian Phebus, Jason breath'd the pray'r.
  'Hear me, bright sovereign of diurnal flame,
From Pagasæ, and walls[31] that bear the name
Of my lov'd sire, thy promis'd aid impart,
Thy sacred oracles sustain my heart,
Assur'd, in perils, of a guide and friend,
Assur'd, in wanderings, of a glorious end.

[31] Æsonis, a city of Magnesia, so called after Æson.

O thou, whose influence, with prophetic force,
Supreme impels us in this untried course;
Fulfil thy word, and o'er that course preside,
My lov'd companions and their vessel guide;
In Colchos let them win the precious fleece;
Then safe return them to the shores of Greece.
For ev'ry youth that gains his native land,
A sacred steer shall at thine altar stand.
In Delphi shall my votive gifts remain;
My gifts in Delos grace thine honour'd fane.
This for the future. Now, propitious pow'r,
Receive these offerings of the parting hour.
Ere from the shore they loose the stately bark,
These youthful heroes with thy favour mark.
Let prosperous omens, at thy word, prevail,
And winds propitious fill the spreading sail.'
These pious prayers and adorations pass'd,
The salted meal was on the victims cast,
The toilsome part of sacrificial rite,
A task that needs superior nerves and might,
Was proud Ancæus' and Alcides' care;
With garb succinct they for the work prepare.
His pond'rous club Alcides wields; the blow,
Aim'd at the forehead, laid the victim low,
Collaps'd and motionless upon the sand,
He shows the prowess of that matchless hand.
To thee, Ancæus, his companion bends;
A brazen ax upon his neck descends.
Through the strong tendons pass'd the gory wound,
His horns, in falling, plough the solid ground.
The' attendants slay the beasts, and strip the hide,
The limbs they sever, and the flesh divide;
The thighs, allotted to the heav'nly race,
Involve in fat, and on the altar place.

They light the hallow'd flame; aloft it tow'rs:
The son of Æson the libation pours,
Sweet-smelling stream, unmix'd and sparkling wine.
Propitious omen from the pow'rs divine,
The prophet Idmon sees the blaze ascend,
And wreathing smoke its purple volumes bend.
The destinies came rushing o'er his thought,
And thus he utter'd what Apollo taught:
'Exult, my gallant friends, the fates ordain
A safe return, from wanderings o'er the main.
Exulting shall ye bear the golden fleece,
Exulting tread the happy plains of Greece.
But 'tis decreed, you must your paths explore
Through toils unnumber'd ere you gain that shore:
And dangers multiplied, by doom of fate,
And equal labours your return await.
Severer lot to me my fates assign,
Untimely death on Asia's plain is mine.
No sudden auguries this warning send,
Long have I learn'd to contemplate my end.
But, be it so; I hail the' illustrious doom,
And welcome glory with the' untimely tomb.'
He ceas'd. Astonishment the hearers fill'd;
And mingled joy and grief their bosoms thrill'd:
While noble Idmon's early fate they mourn,
With joy they feel the promis'd safe return.
His noontide station when the sun had pass'd,
And the tall rocks a lengthen'd shadow cast,
Along the sands, beside the hoary deep
Abundant leaves, a silvan couch, they heap.
There, while from toil the godlike band repose,
The viands are prepar'd, the goblet flows;
The copious jars of generous wine abound,
And sport, and laugh, and gay discourse go round,

While youth and health expand the gladden'd heart,
The graceful trifling food and wine impart,
Careless effusions of the soul elate,
From bitter taunt remov'd, and loud debate.
But Jason shar'd not in the general mirth,
Gloom seiz'd his brow at deep reflection's birth.
Much he revolv'd the perils of the way,
The doubtful wand'rings that before him lay.
Him Idas, marking, loudly thus assails:
'What counsel, Jason, in thy mind prevails?
Why from thy friends the lab'ring purpose hide?
Does chilling fear within thy breast abide?
An impulse vile that womankind controls,
Or worse than women, men with female souls.
I swear to thee, on this impetuous spear,
By which renown in fields of blood I bear,
Source of my fame, as object of my love,
More sure protection than the pow'r of Jove,
No fatal dangers shall impede thy course,
No labours prove superior to thy force;
Though godhead should attempt thine aims to foil,
Since Idas joins thee from Arene's soil.'
He spake; and eager with both hands sustain'd
A mighty bowl, and to the bottom drain'd.
Those boastive lips were drench'd in liquid gold,
O'er his brown cheeks the foaming liquor roll'd.
A burst of anger murmur'd through the host,
And Idmon[32] thus reprov'd his impious boast:
'How canst thou harbour such irreverent thought,
With sure destruction to the thinker fraught?

[32] The prophet Idmon is introduced with peculiar propriety, as reproving the impious boast of the intemperate and ferocious Idas.

What dire suggestions thy rash tongue impel?
Do fumes of wine within thy bosom swell?
In danger words of confidence we love,
But sounds of blasphemy abhorrence move.
Nor hope nor comfort can the tongue supply,
That wakes a fear of vengeance from on high.
Thus, vain of strength that heav'n itself had giv'n,
The Titans, impious brood, di parag'd Heav'n: 770
With mighty Jove equality they claim'd;
But vengeful shafts their wild presumption tam'd:
Latona's children wing'd the flying wound;
The boasters sunk extended on the ground.'
From Idas deaf'ning shouts of laughter broke;
With scornful act and taunting words he spoke:
'Come on, and by your auguries declare,
What fate the deities for me prepare;
Say, does your boasted sire[33] reserve for me
The doom that reach'd the Titan progeny? 780
Or rather think, how his prophetic skill
May save a coward from impending ill,
Lest, liar prov'd, the chastisement he bear,
That waits imposture from my piercing spear.'
As thus he loudly rav'd in brawling tone,
More and more fierce had their contention grown;
But their companions join'd reproach and threat,
And Jason rose to calm the' intemp'rate heat.
Then Orpheus tun'd the lyre, and tried the song,
Strains worthy Heav'n, to calm the' infuriate throng. 790
He[34] sung how 'earth, and ocean, and the sky,
Discordant union of deformity,

[33] Apollo.

[34] He sung.—Silius Italicus has imitated this passage in his 11th Book, where he represents Tenthras singing and playing

Were mix'd in chaos, ere the pow'r divine
Bade beauteous order from confusion shine;
Bade the bright orb his stated journeys know,
And mountains rise, and sounding rivers flow.
Then beauteous nymphs along the margins rov'd,
And living creatures through creation mov'd.
Ophion next, and his fair bride he sung,
Eurynomé, from hoary Ocean sprung;
On cold Olympus'[35] snowy top they dwelt,
Awhile the middle air their sceptre felt:
But soon Ophion yields to Saturn's arms,
* * * * * *
Hurl'd from their throne, departed pow'r to weep,
They find a refuge in the parent deep.
Their conquerors with rule unquestion'd sway'd,
And gods and Titans their behests obey'd:
While Ida's caves the future Jove conceal'd,
An infant yet, nor to himself reveal'd;
Ere perfect godhead in his bosom wrought,
Or boundless sway burst glorious on his thought;
Ere earth-born Cyclops arm'd his hand of ire,
With rattling thunders, and with forky fire.'
The voice and lyre had ceas'd[36]; yet still the band
With heads inclin'd, in mute attention stand.

on the lyre; the song of Jopas also in Virgil is somewhat similar to this of Orpheus.

35 Milton—Birthright seiz'd
By younger Saturn, he from mightier Jove
His own and Rhea's son like measure found,
So Jove usurping reign'd: these first in Crete
From Ida known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus rul'd the middle air.

36 Milton has imitated this passage:
The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear, &c.

A sacred silence! e'en to breathe they fear;
The sounds harmonious vibrate on the ear;
Delicious stillness, inward calm they find
Soothe every pulse, and soften every mind.
Of sleep admonish'd by the falling night,
They mix libations, as a parting rite,
To Maia's son[37] the tongues selected blaze;
In wine they quench them as the flame decays.
With radiant eyes the glorious dawn advanc'd,
And o'er the crags of lofty Pelion glanc'd.
In the smooth swell propitious breezes lave
Their sportive wings, and gently curl the wave.
Then Tiphys rousing calls along the shores,
'Embark, my gallant friends, and man your oars.'
Loud as he calls the winding shores resound,
The gulf of Pagasæ rebellows round:
But speech portentous soon impell'd the crowd,
The vessel spoke with human voice endow'd;
For Pallas had enclos'd within its frame
The vocal wood[38] that from Dodona came.
The heroes spring on board, and crowding find
The stations at their oars by lot assign'd;
Train'd to the task they lay their arms aside,
And all prepare to sweep the sounding tide.

[37] It was the custom among the ancients, when they were about to retire to rest, to offer up the tongues of the victims, and pour wine upon them. This was natural—Mercury was the god of speech, and when sleep came to seal the lips in silence, it was proper to sacrifice to that god the organ of speech. The Greek Scholiast says the custom took rise among the Megagrensians, and gives a long account of its origin.

[38] The oaks in the wood of Dodona were gifted with the power of speech, and uttered oracles.

Ancæus occupied the central post,
Alcides near him, in himself an host.
The dread of monsters, and misfortune's aid,
His mighty club was near the hero laid.
The lab'ring keel confess'd the godlike freight,
And deeper plung'd, and groan'd beneath his weight.
The cables now within the ship they drew,
And o'er the waves their last libations threw.
The shores retire in mist, the hills recede,
Then o'er his native roof, and parent mead,
An eager parting look as Jason gave,
He swell'd the breeze with sighs, with tears he swell'd the wave.
The nervous rowers, like some youthful choir,
That dance in cadence round the mystic fire,
(In Delphi, and Ortygia the divine,
And where thy silver streams, Ismenus[39], shine,
Their nimble feet, in cadence to the sound
Of lyre and voices, lightly beat the ground:)
While Orpheus through the vocal strings explores
The soul of music, ply the' harmonious oars.
At every stroke in foam the brine arose;
The hoarse wave murmurs as the vessel goes.
As, rising on their oars, the vigorous throng
Plough the dark waves, the vessel shoots along.
Their polish'd arms repel the dazzling beam,
And o'er the waters dart a fiery gleam.
Behind the ship a hoary track succeeds,
As pathways whiten through the verdant meads.
That signal day, from all the' abodes on high,
The bless'd immortals cast a wond'ring eye;
And saw the vessel, with her godlike crew,
Through paths untried the glorious course pursue.

39 Ismenus, a river of Bœotia.

On Pelion's heights, and every summit, stood
The'assembled nymphs of mountain, dale, and wood.
They gaz'd entranc'd; amazement and delight
Possess'd their souls at the stupendous sight,
The fabric of Itonian [40] Pallas' hand
Mov'd o'er the deep, by that heroic band.
And he [41], whom Phillira to Saturn bore,
From steepy mountains seeks the sounding shore.
Where the white breakers o'er the pebbles rave,
Amid the foam advancing through the wave,
With hands uprais'd, he hail'd the parting train,
'Safe may ye sail, and safe your homes regain.'
Near him his consort Chariclo appears,
The young Achilles in her arms she bears,
And holds him forward, as the vessel flies,
With one last look to glad a father's eyes.
And now, the winding shores and harbours pass'd,
They boldly launch into the wat'ry vast.
The prudent Tiphys o'er their course presides;
The polish'd helm with skilful hand he guides.
Now, in its station the tall mast they plac'd,
On either hand with well-strain'd cordage brac'd;
While, to the topmast as they raise the sail,
The breezes whistling through the shrouds prevail.
White floating on the wind the canvass flew;
The shrouds through pullies to the deck they drew.
Now, smoothly gliding o'er the liquid plain,
Tisæan [42] cliffs they pass, and Dian's fane.

[40] So called, from a temple of corresponding names at Coronea, in Bœotia.

[41] The centaur Chiron, to whom the education of Achilles was entrusted.

[42] Tisæum was a promontory of Thessaly.

In measur'd descant Orpheus touch'd the wires,
To strain melodious, that the place inspires.
Thee, tutelary maid, the poet sung,
Thee, Artemis, from Jove eternal sprung.
'Benign, to guide the vessel on her way,
Marine Iolchos owns thy radiant sway.'
The fish, enamour'd of the strains divine,
Rose from the depths, exulting on the brine,
Of various form and size, the finny droves
Obedient follow, where the vessel moves.
As flocks unnumber'd, when the shepherd leads,
Satiate with food, forsake the dewy meads.
He steps before them till their cotes they gain,
His shrilly pipe resounds an artless strain
Of rustic sweetness: with resistless charm,
Thy music, Orpheus, led the scaly swarm.
Loud and propitious sang the rising wind;
Dark sinks Pelasgia's fertile shore behind.
Now rushing onward in their rapid flight,
They pass the steeps of Pelion's rocky height;
And Sepias [43], at whose foot the billows rave,
Steals from the prospect, mingling with the wave.
By sea-girt Sciathus [44] their course they steer;
In view remote Piresia's towers appear,
Magnesia, rising o'er the beach serene,
The tomb of Dolops, and the shelter'd scene.
Now ev'ning came, and adverse winds with eve,
The troubled deep the toil-worn sailors leave.
Admonish'd by the place, and evening's gloom,
They paid due honours at the hero's tomb [45].

43 A promontory near Iolchos.

44 An island near Eubœa.

45 At the tomb of Dolops.

Such vows were offer'd, such libations shed,
Such victims slain, as suit the parted dead.
The mounting billows with the tempest roar;
Two days they shunn'd its fury on the shore;
On the third morn, they push the ship from land,
And to the breeze their ample sails expand.
And still the name of Aphetæ prevails [46],
To mark the place where Argo spread her sails.
Now in their course they Melibœa pass'd [47],
A rocky shore, vex'd by the raging blast.
At dawn of day, in prospect near they sweep,
By Homole [48] projecting o'er the deep,
Ere long the mouth of Amyrus to gain,
That blends his crystal waters with the main.
Now full in view of deep ravines they glide,
And steepy rocks, that break the swelling tide,
Indented deep, where clouds on Ossa low'r,
And cloth'd in woods Olympian summits tow'r.
Borne by the winds all night, their course they bend
Where sloping wide Pallene's sides descend;
By Canastræum's cliff [49] they wing their way.
And now, conspicuous with the dawning ray,
His stately head the mighty Athos shows,
Sublimely towering o'er the Thracian snows.
Such space, as vessels well equip'd may run
'Twixt rising morn and the meridian sun,
To Vulcan's [50] isle from Athos lies outspread.
Yet such the height of his majestic head,

[46] From a Greek word, Aphiemi.
[47] A city of Thessaly.
[48] A mountain of Thessaly.
[49] A promontory of Macedonia.
[50] Lemnos.

O'er Lemnos the gigantic shadow falls,
And casts a gloom within Myrine's [51] walls.
Through the long day, till shades of ev'ning fell,
The winds blow fresh the' expanded sails to swell.
The dying breeze with sinking daylight fails,
Then loosely flutt'ring hung their idle sails;
With energy renew'd they ply their oars,
And soon they gain the rocky Lemnian shores.
Rough as the rocks, relentless as the flood,
The guilty natives drench'd the soil in blood.
Nor yet unpunish'd. Scarcely had the sun
One annual journey through the zodiac run,
Since jealous rage had arm'd the female band,
And crush'd the males beneath their murd'rous hand.
Despis'd, rejected, from their homes expell'd,
The place of love desire of vengeance held.
For when their husbands had from war return'd,
Their savage breasts with flame illicit burn'd:
The captive fair the captors had enchain'd;
(Nor prudence warn'd, nor decency restrain'd.)
From ravag'd Thrace they came, with weeping charms,
Ah, soon to perish in their lover's arms!
Her name dishonour'd, and her rites withheld,
Indignant Venus to the deed impell'd.
O wretched women, blind with jealous rage!
Against your husbands deadly war ye wage.
Nor husbands only, all the sex must bleed;
Lest the survivors should avenge the deed.
The young Hypsipile alone confess'd
The voice of nature pleading in her breast;
Amid the bloody deeds of frantic ire,
With pious care she sav'd her hoary sire,

[51] A city of Lemnos.

Thoas, who long the Lemnian sceptre bore.
Conceal'd, she sends him from the guilty shore.
His aged limbs within a coffer laid,
With art she hid him, and with art convey'd;
If haply he might scape. Ænea's strand
Yields him a refuge from the cruel band.
The vine-clad island bore that ancient name [52],
From fisher tribes its modern title came.
For when Sicinus the possession gain'd,
Its owner's name the subject soil retain'd.
Birth to the naiad nymph Sicinus ow'd,
And through his veins the blood of Thoas flow'd.
To feed their flocks, the brazen arms to wield,
To tame with ploughshares the reluctant field,
For such pursuits the Amazonian fair
Desert the subjects of their former care,
And scorn the works that Pallas taught of old,
To wing the shuttle, or the distaff hold.
Yet still, with anxious gloom and throbbing heart,
O'er the broad main a watchful glance they dart.
Alarm'd, they see the' approaching sail appear,
And think the Thracians arm'd for vengeance near.
They rush in armour from Myrine's walls,
And crowd the strand where seeming danger calls.
With frantic rage and terror fill'd they go,
Like bacchanals, to meet the' imagin'd foe.
Hypsipile assum'd her father's arms,
And led the van, terrific in her charms.
But none resource or energy possess'd;
Fear chain'd the tongue, and palsy'd every breast.
While these on shore some dread event attend,
The chiefs from sea their peaceful envoys send.

[52] From the Greek word Oinos, signifying wine.

Ethalides the herald, swift of pace,
Bless'd by his father with persuasive grace,
Selected organ of their joint desire,
Bears the caduceus of his heav'nly sire [53].
Strange powers to him that sire indulgent gave,
Superior rising o'er the' unconscious grave.
Wondrous exemption from the common doom
Of parted spirits, in the Stygian gloom,
When first he sought the' irremeable bounds
To reach the seats that Acheron surrounds,
Oblivious death rever'd the parted shade,
That half despis'd, and half his stroke obey'd.
By stated compact, half resign'd to night,
And half releas'd, returning to the light.
But wherefore through the fabled legends run
That ancient bards relate of Hermes' son?
With soothing speech the Lemnian queen he drew,
To grant a landing to the warlike crew.
They leave their vessel at the' approach of night,
Nor loose their cables with returning light.
For loud and adverse howl'd the northern blast;
Meantime, the Lemnian dames to council haste.
Such was the purport of their queen's command,
And through the city crowd the' observant band.
Frequent and full they sate. Their sov'reign rose [54];
And from her lips this exhortation flows:
'Friends, let us with a bounteous hand assign
Copious provisions, and heart-chearing wine,
Gifts, that the sea-worn mariner desires,
To bend these strangers to what need requires.
Their quick departure, where their voyage calls;
At least their stay without the city walls.

[53] Mercury. [54] Hypsipile.

Lest here, with scrutinizing search, they know
Our tale of guilt, of weakness, and of woe.
Dire was our act; and they through ev'ry clime
May waft the story of our monstrous crime.
Then, who can tell what hostile thoughts may breed
Within their minds, from knowledge of the deed?
Ye hear my thoughts. If any can reveal
Counsels more suited to the common weal,
We give them audience with attentive ear,
For 'tis the scope of our assemblage here.'
She ceas'd, and to the marble throne retir'd,
Seat of her sire. With eloquence inspir'd,
Her nurse Polyxo rose, an aged form,
With wrinkles charg'd, and blanch'd with many a storm.
Her limbs decrepit fail'd beneath her weight,
A faithful staff supports their trembling freight.
Two blooming virgins at her side attend,
By love and Venus never taught to bend;
Fierce in the pride of youth, and wildly fair,
In graceful ringlets wav'd their golden hair.
Time with his weary yoke her shoulders bow'd;
She scarcely rear'd her head amid the crowd.
And thus she spake:—
'Yes, as our queen commands,
Send we donations to the stranger bands;
The better course. And now, my friends, decide
What firm resolves your future lives shall guide.
Should fierce invasion burst from hostile Thrace,
Or other foes among the manly race,
(For many an inroad we may justly fear)
Ev'n now we find a sudden force is here.
Say, should the gods avert the present doom,
What wars and suff'rings threat the years to come!

The seniors soon shall quit this mortal stage;
The young desponding sink to childless age.
How shall ye, then, maintain the martial strife?
Or how, ye wretches, find the means of life?
Shall the slow ox spontaneous till the soil,
Assume the yoke, and in the furrow toil?
Or when your fields the golden ears display,
Shall oxen reap, and to the barns convey?
For me, though fates forbear to cut my thread,
And shrink abhorrent from this hoary head,
Yet, in the next revolving year, I trust
These limbs shall mingle with their kindred dust;
There I shall sleep, interr'd by pious hands,
And 'scape the perils that await these lands.
But much I feel for those of greener age;
The present crisis should their thoughts engage.
Neglect it not. Improv'd by timely skill,
It brings you refuge from impending ill.
These strangers in your cause with gifts combine;
And houses grant, and settlements assign.'
She ceas'd; her sentence from the'assembly draws
Tumultuous bursts, and murmurs of applause.
Midst the confusion, with a placid mien
And graceful action, rose the youthful queen.
'If such a wish pervades the general mind;
Our envoy soon the stranger band may find.'
She spake; and turning to the' attendant maid,
That near her stood, 'Iphinöe haste, (she said)
Where the tall vessel on the billow rides,
The chieftain seek, that o'er the band presides;
For this abode let him exchange the main;
And hear my voice the general wish explain.
And let his band, if peaceful minds they bear,
Our mansions enter, and partake our cheer.'

The assembly then dismiss'd, her home she sought.
Iphinoë hasted, as the mandate taught,
And soon the Minyæ greets. The band explore,
What motive urg'd her to the sea-beat shore.
Prompt she replied. 'A princess young and fair,
Daughter of Thoas, bids me thus repair,
Eager to speak the wishes of the land,
Through me she greets the leader of this band;
And calls the train, if peaceful minds they bear,
To seek our mansion, and partake our cheer.' 1130
She ceas'd; a message in such soothing words,
With every bosom of the throng accords.
They deem'd, that Thoas, to his fathers gone,
Had left this heiress of a peaceful throne,
Child of his age. Of all suspicion clear,
The crimes of Lemnos had not reach'd their ear.
They bid their chief obey the welcome call,
Prepar'd themselves to seek Myrine's wall.
The chief a mantle o'er his shoulders cast;
A clasp retain'd the purple texture fast. 1140
The clasp and web Itonian Pallas gave,
Work of her hands, and worthy of the brave,
When Argo's keel she form'd, to cleave the brine;
And shap'd her timbers with the rule and line.
Of scarlet die, more dazzling to behold
Than orient suns, that dawn in ruddy gold,
The central red, a purple border grac'd,
Where skill divine had many a figure trac'd.
Bent o'er the' immortal task the Cyclops stand,
And forge the bolts, that arm the thunderer's hand. 1150
Beneath their toil the' almighty weapon grew,
Ev'n now, it lighten'd with effulgence blue.

Imperfect yet the work of heavenly ire,
One fork it wanted of devouring fire.
They rais'd their hands, the glowing mass they ply'd,
And flaming sparkles flash'd on ev'ry side;
Amphion there, and Zethus, whom, of yore,
Antiopè beside Asopus [55] bore,
Were both pourtray'd; and Thebes without a wall,
Ere stones assembled, at the poet's [56] call.
The walls uprear'd by toil fraternal grow.
Huge rocky fragments from the mountain's brow
The ruder Zethus on his shoulder bears;
The nervous youth in toiling act appears.
A double portion mild Amphion brought;
But not by force the mighty work he wrought.
His golden lyre and melting voice combine;
The rocks obedient feel the sounds divine.
With floating tresses there was beauty's queen,
And in her hand the shield of Mars was seen;
From her left shoulder wav'd the flowing vest,
And show'd her iv'ry arm and snowy breast,
While the bright buckler, that the goddess held,
A faithful image of her charms repell'd.
There were deep pasture's graz'd by many a drove,
And hostile bands for the possession strove.
From Teleboan Taphians [57], men of spoil,
Alectryon's sons embattled guard the soil.
These would defend, and those obtain the prize,
And streaming blood the field of combat dies.
Superior numbers quell'd the rustic band,
And swept the plunder of the ravag'd land.

[55] A river of Greece. [56] Amphion.

[57] Taphos, one of the islands called Echinades; the inhabitants were a race of pirates.

Two chariots there contended o'er the plains,
And Pelops guides the first, and shakes the reins;
Hippodamiä by his side was plac'd,
And Myrtilus with eager fury chas'd;
In act to strike, the spear Ænomaus held,
And now in thought, through Pelop's back impell'd.
The axle crashes, faithless to its trust,
And leaves their vengeance prostrate in the dust.
There Phebus, yet a stripling, rose to view,
'Gainst impious Tityos, as the bow he drew,
A monster, nourish'd by the fruitful earth,
From Jove and Elaré he took his birth,
Matur'd in bulk within her deepest cave,
A second birth, with pangs immense, she gave,
His furious hands were on Latona laid,
But soon her offspring lent his timely aid.
The goddess by her radiant locks he drew,
The bow resounded, the sharp arrow flew.
Iolchian Phryxus seem'd to breathe, to hear
The voice portentous, with astonish'd ear.
And there the ram, pourtray'd with equal skill,
In act of speaking seem'd, and vocal still.
Nature so true, deception so complete,
The gazer's eye could scarce detect the cheat.
He listens, with attention most profound,
And waits and waits, to catch the flying sound.
Such Pallas' gift. A lance the hero shook;
Pois'd by his strength, no narrow range it took.
From lofty Mænalus, that mountain hoar,
A pledge of friendship; he the weapon bore,
From Atalanta. Rural scenes among,
The chief she met; and sought to join his throng;
But he forbade; lest beauty's magic sway
O'er youthful minds should wake intestine fray.

Now Jason seeks the city, beaming bright
As that resplendent star that darts his light,
At close of day, the messenger of love.
With throbbing breast the virgin sees him move,
Bless'd harbinger of Hymen's nuptial blaze,
To gild the bridal roof with festive rays.
Like her own blushes sweet she sees him rise,
With happiest auguries to glad her eyes,
To tell her that the youth shall soon appear,
Hope of her heart, yet object of her fear,
Whom stern necessity too long detains,
Indignant of delay, on distant plains,
Lord of her wishes, for whose longing arms
Parental care reserves her virgin charms.
Thus Jason mov'd, like a celestial light,
To joyful crowds so welcome and so bright.
Tumultuous at the city gates they throng,
With downcast eyes the hero moves along,
Eager delight among the crowd prevail'd,
And cries of joy the graceful stranger hail'd.
He reach'd the palace of the royal maid [58],
The folding gates the' attendants wide display'd.
The gates with skill the builder had dispos'd;
And polish'd bolts the pervious passage clos'd.
Swift through the porch her guest Iphinoë led,
And plac'd him where a splendid couch was spread.
Full opposite was set the youthful queen,
Her glowing cheeks, and her disorder'd mien,
Betray'd the' emotions of her throbbing breast.
With soothing speech the stranger she address'd.
'Say, stranger, to this shore what motive calls?
Why would ye linger thus without our walls?

[58] Hypsipile.

Beneath our roofs no hostile greetings fear,
The feebler sex alone inhabits here.
Far, far remote are all the manly race,
And now they plough the fertile lands of Thrace.
Attend, and hear my faithful tongue disclose,
Without disguise, the story of our woes.
My sire was Thoas. When he rul'd this land,
The Lemnians muster'd an invading band.
In ships to Thrace they cross'd the sounding main,
Despoil'd the dwellings, and laid waste the plain.
Returning home, more priz'd than all the spoil,
They bore the maidens of the ravag'd soil.
Foe to this land, the queen of soft alarms
Inspir'd a purpose fraught with deadly harms.
Their youthful wives the madding train beheld
With mortal hate, and from their homes expell'd.
Their place the captives of the spear obtain'd;
Such full dominion had their frenzy gain'd.
Long time we silent mourn'd, and hop'd to prove
Returning reason, and reviving love.
In vain we hop'd. Our patience from the throng
Drew added insults, and redoubled wrong.
The lawful offspring was belov'd no more;
The bastard drove him from his father's door.
The widow'd wife, and unprotected maid,
Implor'd the husband's and the father's aid;
Implor'd in vain; an helpless outcast band,
Our streets they crowded, and they rang'd the land.
The mangled maid, the' injurious step-dame's thrall,
In vain for pity to her sire might call.
For aid the sister to her brother flies;
No more the brother feels fraternal ties.
Th' afflicted mother calls her sons around;
She gains no hearing, no relief is found.

The captive conquerors held our dear abodes,
Dance, forum, ev'n the banquet of the gods.
At length, some god or misery inspir'd
A wondrous boldness, that our state requir'd.
'Gainst those false men we clos'd the gates and tow'rs,
While with their Thracians they consum'd the hours;
Till they to reason should restore her seat,
Or with their captives seek some new retreat.
Whate'er of manly progeny remain'd
Within our walls, their earnest prayers obtain'd:
With them they cross the seas, and Thrace regain,
Where drifted snows o'erwhelm the wintry plain.
Hence, we for sojourners have ample room.
Abide with us; the vacant space assume.
To this alliance if thy thoughts incline,
The crown my father wore shall now be thine.
Nor shall ye blame the produce of our soil;
No land more richly pays the farmer's toil;
Nor in the' Ægean deep does island lie,
In Ceres' gifts, that may with Lemnos vie.
But seek your ship; let your companions hear
Our friendly words; no more these walls forbear.'
She ceas'd; the veil of secrecy was cast
O'er the dire slaughter that in Lemnos pass'd.
When Jason thus: 'O queen, with grateful hearts,
We take those aids your bounteous hand imparts.
I seek the ship, soon to return again;
But you, your sceptre and your isle retain.
Think not, through scorn your offer I decline;
But perils vast, and fated toils are mine.'
He press'd her hand, and hasted to repair
With peaceful tidings from the royal fair.
As to the city gates he pass'd along,
Around his steps the blooming maidens throng,

From every side; ten thousand beauteous dames,
With looks of transport, and with loud acclaims.
A train of waggons, rolling on the shore,
Gifts and refreshments to the strangers bore;
The band, in order, hear their chief report
The words of welcome from the Lemnian court;
Words, that with all a joyful hearing find;
For amorous wishes rose in every mind:
The soft desires, that beauty's queen inspir'd,
Anxious to work what Vulcan most desir'd;
From desolation to redeem his land,
And crowd his altars with a manly band.
  Now Jason seeks the Lemnian queen's abode;
And each, as chance directs, pursues his road.
By choice, Alcides at the ship remain'd,
And for a guard a chosen few retain'd;
No soft indulgence could admission find,
No fond delights subdue that mighty mind.
  In choral songs, its joy the city breath'd,
And dance, and feast, and clouds of incense wreath'd.
To Vulcan, chief of the celestial throng,
Were sacrifices given, and sacred song;
And his fair bride, the sovereign queen of charms,
Was call'd propitious to their soft alarms.
  Their voyage is deferr'd from day to day,
Still new pretences authorize delay;
Still had they linger'd, by delights enthrall'd,
But stern Alcides his companions call'd.
He view'd their weakness with indignant heart,
He call'd them from the female train apart.
  Reproachful he began—'Are then the band
A troop of exiles from their native land?
Have you for consorts plough'd the billowy flood,
And scorn'd the virgins of your kindred blood?

Have we for this endur'd such mighty toil?
As colonists to till the Lemnian soil?
Suits it the honour of your former praise,
With foreign dames to waste inglorious days?
In bondage crowded, captives of the fair,
Will ye renounce the subject of your prayer?
How shall the gods such sacrifice behold?
Will they spontaneous grant the fleece of gold?
Each to his home return. Let Jason prove
The joys that wait Hypsipile and love;
For them, his country and his fame resign,
And people Lemnos with a manly line.'

The sharp invective wak'd their shame and pride.
With downcast eyes they stood; and none replied.
The' assembly parts confus'd, and each, in haste,
Prepares again to tempt the watery waste.

That purpose known, in swarms with murmur loud,
Among the youths the busy females crowd.
As bees from hollow rocks, with murmuring sound,
Pour forth, and buz the beauteous flow'rs around;
Refresh'd with dew-drops smile the fragrant meads;
While they, from flower to flower, as fancy leads,
On pinions light pursue their airy toil,
And drain from silky cups the nectar'd spoil;
With tender action, and with plaintive tongue,
To some lov'd youth each Lemnian female clung,
And fondly pray'd, with hands and eyes up-borne,
The gracious gods to grant his safe return.

Hypsipile the hand of Jason press'd;
And tears reliev'd her agonizing breast.
'Go then. May heaven your brave companions guard;
And may the golden fleece your toils reward!

Go then, my friend, the' heroic aim pursue;
The glorious fortune, to such merit due.
Know, that this isle, and my paternal throne,
Wait thy return, reserv'd for thee alone.
Myriads on myriads would augment thy train,
From many a city, and from many a plain;
But well I know thou never wilt return,
And I am doom'd with hopeless flames to burn.
Yet go, and whether far remote or near,
My faithful image through thy wand'rings bear.
Some parting mandate leave, that I may prove
The fond remembrance of an absent love.
Some blessing to the produce of our flame,
If heaven shall crown me with a parent's name.'
Then Jason, wondering at her love, replied,
'Events propitious from the gods betide!
Awake to passion, yet thy lover's mind
Supremely feels the patriot wish refin'd.
Beset with dangers wheresoe'er I roam,
With fond attachment I pursue my home.
If heaven shall aid me to surmount my toil,
And bring me safely to my native soil;
To friendly views may Pelias' heart incline,
And native seats, domestic joys be mine.
But of this frame should diff'rent fates dispose,
And distant regions must my wand'rings close,
Then, should a son our mutual wishes crown,
When youth invests his cheek with manly down,
Let him Iolcus in Pelasgia find,
And soothe with duty the parental mind;
In sorrows lingering should my parents stay,
To mourn a son untimely snatch'd away;
But should they then have sought the' Elysian plain,
Not wholly friendless shall my child remain;

My countrymen, far from the tyrant's court,
Within their dwellings shall his youth support.'
Thus saying, to the ship he led the way,
His firm example all the train obey.
Embark'd, with hand robust they grasp'd their oars,
In order plac'd; and Argus from the shores
The cables loos'd. The bending sweeps they plied;
And sinewy arms upturn'd the curling tide.
By Orpheus counsel'd, as the day declin'd,
Fair Samothrace, Electra's seat, they find,
Daughter of Atlas, that to them reveal'd
The mystic rites with sacred awe conceal'd,
And doubly purified, in frame and mind,
Objects of love to the celestial kind,
With pious confidence the' adventurous train
Might meet the perils of the stormy main.
But, cease my tongue, nor with unhallow'd sound
Pursue the strange mysterious theme profound,
No subject meet of song; let silence hide
That isle, and deities who there preside.
Through the vast depths of the Melanian surge,
Their eager course the' unwearied rowers urge.
The shore of Thrace upon the right hand lies,
And on their left the rocks of Imbrus rise.
When now the sun first sunk into the main,
A wide extent, the Chersonese they gain.
Strong rose the southern blast; they set their sails,
And thrid the current, while the breeze prevails.
A dangerous strait, that hapless Helle's name,
And doom untimely, consecrate to fame.
That upper sea they left, with morning ray,
A different measure, at the close of day.
All night along Rhæteian shores they steer;
Idæan uplands on their right appear.

Dardania pass'd, Abydus then they gain,
Percoté next, Aharnis' sandy plain,
And Pityeä fair. With steady force
The winds direct impell'd their onward course,
And safely through the Hellespont they pass'd,
In eddies blackening through the greedy vast.
Within Propontis tow'r'd a lofty isle,
Where Phrygia's wealthy plains adjacent smile.
An island then; for now the base extends,
With daily augments, that the water lends,
To meet the main land, rising through the wave,
And hears on either side the billows rave.
Far as it stretches through the wat'ry roar,
With gradual course declining to the shore,
The swelling strand a two-fold access knows;
Beneath, the current of Æsepus flows.
The height above is call'd the mount of bears;
A name expressive of the general fears;
For savage beasts, and men more savage still,
With terrors multiplied that region fill.
An earth-born race, inur'd to spoil and wrong,
Six hands of violence to each belong;
Two sinewy arms from their broad shoulders grow;
Four from their horrid sides depend below.
The Dolians, a more mild and peaceful train,
Held the low Isthmus; and o'erspread the plain.
They temperate rule and equal laws obey'd;
Thessalian Cyzicus their sceptre sway'd,
The son of Eneus, whom Enete bore,
Ensorus' daughter, on the Thracian shore.
No wrongs they prov'd, from that fierce earth-born kind,
For Neptune's influence aw'd the savage mind.

Deriv'd from him, in long transmitted line,
The Dolians boast an origin divine.
With fury Argo runs her watery race,
Before the' impetuous winds of stormy Thrace,
An haven fair receives the weary band;
As driven with force the vessel dash'd to land.
There, as sage Tiphys bade, the cautious crew
Their stony anchor near a fountain threw,
Artacia's fount. A rock of ampler size,
And weight more adequate, the place supplies.
This, warn'd by Phebus, in prophetic rhymes,
Ionian colonists, of after times,
Who, led by Neleus, left their native plain,
Set, as a monument, in Pallas' fane.
The guardian pow'r, in every danger tried,
Who guided Jason through the foamy tide.
The Dolians with their monarch sought the strand,
To greet the strangers ere they reach'd the land;
Soon as they learn'd the lineage of the train,
And purpos'd voyage through the stormy main,
They gently urge them, with reception fair,
To ply their oars, and through the bay repair.
The strangers follow where such welcome calls,
And moor their vessel near the city walls.
Now disembark'd, their pious rites to pay,
They rear'd an altar, to the god of day,
Ecbasius, worship'd, when the sea-worn band,
Their dangers pass'd, approach the welcome land.
The friendly monarch, for the rites divine,
The fatted flocks bestow'd, and generous wine.
For previous oracles, with high command,
Assur'd his kindness to the' heroic band,

The purpose of their hardy voyage taught,
And chas'd suspicion from his anxious thought,
Bade him the warriors hail, without a fear,
And aid extend, and hostile acts forbear.
New to his cheek the down of manhood came;
Nor boasts he yet a father's honour'd name.
Within the palace his fair bride remains,
As yet unconscious of a mother's pains,
The fair-hair'd Clité, form'd to wake desire;
Percosian Merops was her noble sire.
Her, won by countless gifts, her husband bore,
In pride of beauty, from Percote's shore.
Young as she was, her free and dauntless mind
The bridal room and nuptial couch resign'd,
To mix familiar with the stranger race,
And share the banquets that their welcome grace.
Meantime, the leaders their discourse prolong,
Alternate questions crowd upon the tongue;
While, from the strangers, Cizycus demands
Their destin'd course, and Pelias' stern commands,
And Jason bids his royal host explain,
What various tribes possess the' adjacent plain;
What various nations, in a circle spread,
Around Propontis' wide capacious bed.
Much more to know, the' advent'rous train require,
Did information second their desire.
When o'er the landscape morning light prevail'd,
The giant heights of Dindymus they scal'd.
The winding bays and shallows to survey;
And, from the station where the vessel lay,
The road of Chytus, Argo came impell'd;
And now the harbour more advanc'd she held.
Long time that arduous mountain path remain'd,
That Jason trod, and still his name retain'd.

Now, from the summits, with impetuous force,
The savage giants urg'd their hostile course.
Beneath the crags of overhanging rock,
The mouth of Chytus they prepare to block,
With stony masses, where it joins the main;
As though they sought some monster to restrain
Within their toils. But, with the younger band,
The strong Alcides takes his watchful stand.
With nervous arms he bends the' unerring bow,
And heaps on parent earth the gasping foe,
The giant race the' undaunted hero plied,
With massy fragments from the mountain's side,
Hurl'd high in air, destruction of the brave,
Such wondrous strength vindictive Juno gave.
To crush Alcides, in the' unequal fight
She crown'd these monsters with stupendous might.
While thus the heroes in the combat burn'd,
Their brave companions from the heights return'd,
And near them in compacted phalanx stand,
To share the slaughter of that earth-born band.
Then, some their fate from flying arrows found,
And some the spear laid prostrate on the ground.
Nor ceas'd the deadly toil, ere all the brood
Had drench'd their native rocks with caitiff blood.
As when the woodmen, o'er some river's bank,
Dispose the lofty trees in many a rank,
New from their axe, that moisture of the stream
May season for the wedge the brittle beam;
Thus, on the margin of the foamy bay,
A space confin'd, in rows the giants lay.
Some, in the waves immerge the breast and head,
While on the beach the monstrous limbs lie spread;
Some rest their heads upon the sandy shore,
And hide their feet beneath the billow's roar,

To birds and fishes of voracious kind
Expos'd a prey, and weltering to the wind.
Their labours freed from danger and from fear,
The vessel to the wind the heroes clear;
With spreading sails her rapid course advanc'd;
All day along the swelling surge she glanc'd.
As day declin'd, the favouring breezes fail,
Too soon succeeded by an adverse gale.
So fierce and sudden that unfriendly blast
The pilot's skill, and rower's strength surpass'd,
Snatch'd from her track, the lab'ring ship it bore,
Back to the Dolian's hospitable shore.
Wrap'd in the shades of night, the' heroic band
Sprung to the shore, nor know that friendly land.
There to the rock they made their cables fast,
Still sacred call'd, though many an age has pass'd.
Nor could the Dolians, through the gloom, descry
Their guests, endear'd by many a social tie;
While Argo some Pelasgic vessel seem'd,
Her people Macris' hostile sons they deem'd;
With armour snatch'd in haste they urg'd their course,
To meet the' imagin'd foes with force to force.
The bands conflicting 'gainst each other dash;
And spears encounter spears, and bucklers clash.
Dire was the onset, loud the cry of fear;
As when among the thickets dry and sere,
A conflagration falls, with noisy sway,
And roaring volumes urge their wasteful way.
Ill-fated king! whom heaven no more allows
To reach his home, or clasp his youthful spouse!
The son of Æson met his bold advance,
And through his breast impell'd the fatal lance.

Around the point the crashing bones resound;
And life's warm current issues from the wound.
Roll'd on the' empurpled sand, the youth sustain'd
The' inevitable doom for man ordain'd.
The fatal barrier burst, that holds confin'd
Within its pale our weak and fev'rish kind.
Thus he, who thought all danger of this band
Far, far remov'd by heaven's protecting hand,
By fate entangled, on that fatal night,
So soon succeeding to the social rite,
With many of his brave companions, slain
In conflict dire, lay prostrate on the plain.
  Alcides reft brave Telecles of life,
With Megabrontes, in the mortal strife;
Acastus mingles Sphodris with the dead,
By Peleus, Zelys and Gephyrus bled;
And Telamon, supreme the lance to wield,
Laid Basileus extended on the field.
With Promus, Hyacinthas press'd the ground,
Idas and Clytius dealt the mortal wound.
The twins of Leda, with unerring aim,
Stout Megalossaces, and Phlogeus tame.
Itomeneus, from Meleager's arm,
And bold Artaces, felt the mortal harm,
Illustrious shades, ye find those tribes among,
The rites, that to the' heroic dead belong.
  The scar'd survivors fled, with panic fear,
Like flights of doves that find the falcon near.
In heaps confus'd, within the gates they crowd;
And fill the city with their clamours loud.
Mournful return from that pernicious fight!
But, when the morn display'd her rosy light,
Both parties then their cruel error knew,
And anguish fill'd each spirit at the view.

The Minyæ mourn'd, as breathless on the shore
The youthful king lay welt'ring in his gore.
Three days with grief conjoin'd they mourn'd the dead;
They tore their hair, and on the corses spread;
And thrice in brazen arms they cours'd around
The heroes clos'd in the sepulchral mound;
The tomb they circled in two bands, and paid
All honours suited to the parted shade;
Image of war, along the grassy plain
The games they led, in memory of the slain;
Where still untouch'd succeeding ages keep,
With pious awe, their monumental heap.
Nor Clité long surviv'd her husband's fate:
New horrors rise to swell the doom of hate.
Eager to follow her departed lord,
Around her neck she knit the fatal cord.
The hapless victim of connubial love
Was mourn'd by every nymph of lawn and grove,
The gods approving mark'd her constant flame,
And bade a prodigy preserve her fame.
The tears, that from her eyes bedew'd the plain,
A fountain rose, and still her name retain.
Sad, and portentous, harbinger of woes,
That cruel morn on every Dolian rose;
And all forgot, in deep despairing mood,
The care of being, and the thoughts of food.
When hunger rag'd, its urgent pangs to heal,
With gloomy haste they snatch'd the casual meal,
On Ceres' gifts, as from the field they came;
And savage food unconscious of the flame.
And still in Cizycus the' Ionian race
To that event a solemn custom trace,

That, when revolving time within their walls,
With annual lapse, the' ill-omen'd day recals,
They homely cakes of coarsest meal prepare,
As emblems of that public grief and care.
Twelve days and nights such stormy blasts prevail,
That ev'n the boldest fear to spread the sail.
The night that follow'd, as the heroes slept,
The watch while Mopsus and Acastus kept,
Near Jason's head with golden tresses crown'd,
The peaceful halcyon wheel'd her airy round; 1690
And, as she wheel'd, foretold in shrilly strain,
A truce with warring winds, that vex'd the main.
That sea-born bird sage Mopsus understood,
And voice presageful of the smiling flood.
Sent by some god the bird return'd again,
With circling flight, and perch'd upon the vane.
Their slumbering chief the heapy fleeces press'd,
The voice of Mopsus interrupts his rest.
From sleep he shook him—' Son of Æson, wake,
To rocky Dindymus [59] thy steps betake. 1700
Where on its top aspires a temple fair,
Appease [60] the mother of the gods by pray'r.
Then shall the tempests cease to vex the main,
So halcyon sings, who never sings in vain.
For, while you slumber'd through the shades of night,
Around the bird of prescience wheel'd her flight.
Know, that on mighty Cybele depend
The storms that bellow, and the waves that rend.
The war of elements, that takes its birth
In the dark entrails of the lab'ring earth, 1710
And every change of airy meteors, bred
Where cold Olympus rears his snowy head.

[59] A mountain of Phrygia.
[60] For the death of Cyzicus.

To her precedence ev'n the thunderer yields,
When earth she leaves, for bright ethereal fields.
All deities, throughout the starry sphere,
That awful source of living things revere.'
The chief, delighted as he spake, attends;
Leaps from his couch, and calls his gallant friends.
In haste he calls, and to the' assembled bands
Explains what Mopsus from the gods commands.
Soon to the mountain, ready at his call,
The youths impell'd the bullock from the stall.
Some from the sacred rocks the vessel clear,
And rowing to the Thracian haven steer,
A few remaining the tall ship defend,
The rest the mountain with their chief ascend.
As in a picture, from that towering height,
The Macrian rocks, and Thrace approach'd the sight;
The Bosphorus involv'd in rising steam,
The hills of Mysia, with Æsepus' stream;
That opposite the level Troade bound,
With Nepe's plain, Adraste's walls around.
An ancient vine, within a neighb'ring wood,
Where first it flourish'd, had for ages stood;
The stock uprooted from the parent soil,
A shape and polish takes from Argus' toil;
An image of the goddess[61], form'd with skill,
They place it high upon a craggy hill,
O'er arching broad where stately beeches grow,
That deeply shoot their twisted roots below.
Stones rudely heap'd an hasty altar made,
With dusky leaves of oak their brows they shade.
The rites begin. They call in hallow'd strains
That awful power o'er Dindymus that reigns.

[61] Cybele.

'Parent of gods, from Phrygia bend thine ear;
And sacred Tityas [62], with Cyllenus [62] hear.'
These only of a numerous train were seen,
The guides of fate, the' assessors of the queen,
Idæan Dactyls, in the Cretan cave,
Whom fair Anchialé to being gave,
When, struggling in Lucina's painful toil,
With both her hands she grasp'd Oaxis' soil [63].
The pious chief, if thus the heav'nly mind
Might yield, to calm the wave, and chain the wind,
With lips devout, and suppliant action prays;
And pours libation, o'er the sacred blaze.
Orpheus commands, the youths in arms advance,
And tread the measures of the warlike dance [64],
With swords they clash their shields; and all around,
Through the vex'd air, the dismal clangors sound.
That ancient custom still the nations keep,
When kings are borne within the tomb to sleep.
In Rhea's worship, still the Phrygian crowd
The goddess soothe, with drums and timbrels loud.
With spotless hands preferr'd, and pious mind,
Their vows and off'rings heavenly favour find.
Divine Antæa [65] mark'd them with delight;
Propitious omens bless'd the gladden'd sight;
The trees above abundant fruit display'd;
And earth below the green and tender blade.

[62] Tityas, Cyllenus.—Names of the Idei Dactyli.

[63] Oaxis.—There was a river of this name in Crete; another in Mesopotamia.

[64] This dance was called Betarmus; from the temple of the deity where it was practised, or from the regulation of movement in dancing.

[65] Rhea was so called: the reader will find the origin of this name in the notes at the end.

From the dark cavern, and the woody lare,
With fawning act, the savage beasts repair.
More wondrous still, amid the thirsty soil,
Of Dindymus, unapt for rustic toil,
From rocky crags the gushing fountain came,
Perennial spring, that bears the hero's name.
That solemn day, the mount of bears along,
They spread the feast, and sooth'd the power with song[66].

The winds were hush'd, as morn began to smile,
And force of rowing bore them from that isle.
Each chief contended in the wat'ry field,
Who most should labour, and who last should yield.
Surrounding ether a still calm possess'd,
And lull'd the waves, and smooth'd old Ocean's breast.
Confiding in that calm, with efforts strong,
They ply'd their oars, the vessel shot along.
Not Neptune's steeds, such was the impetuous force,
With feet of storm, could reach its flying course.
When now the deep with winds began to heave,
Breath'd from the river's banks, at close of eve,
With toil incessant their exertions fail'd;
Unchang'd alone Alcides' might prevail'd.
In strength resistless, to himself he drew
The force conjoin'd of all the lab'ring crew.
His mighty stroke the vessel sends along;
The timbers tremble, with concussion strong.
As onward to the Mysian land they haste,
The roaring mouths of Rhyndacus[67] are pass'd.
Ægeon's monument, and Phrygia's plain,
Lay near in prospect, as they trac'd the main.

[66] Rhea, or Cybele.

[67] Rhyndacus, a river of Phrygia.

Here, as the hero dash'd the wave aside,
His oar broke short within the furrow'd tide.
Half as he grasp'd, with force oblique, he fell;
Half floated wide upon the billowy swell.
His seat regain'd, he gaz'd in silence round;
Strange to his hands appear'd the rest they found.
What time the delvers and the ploughmen haste
Home to the lowly roof and spare repast;
When at the porch their weary knees they rest,
And curse their lot, with pangs of hunger press'd,
Then, squalid from the parch'd and dusty soil,
Gaze on their hands sore from the rustic toil;
They reach'd the dwellings of Ciane's shore,
And Cius' mouths, where waves conflicting roar.
The' Arganthonean mount, with gloomy brow,
Majestic frowns upon the stream below.
The Mysian habitants, along the plain,
With fair reception greet the peaceful train;
And to their wants supply, with lib'ral hand,
Whate'er the sea-worn mariners demand.
All that for banquet or repose they need,
The racy vintage some, and fleecy breed;
And some collect the billets sere and dry;
Soft herbage others for the couch supply.
Part of the Minyæ round the hearths repair;
Part mingle wine; the viands part prepare;
They worship Phebus[68], as the sun descends,
Rever'd by sailors when their voyage ends.
The festive rites the son of Jove resign'd,
For different thoughts possess'd his active mind;
Through woods perplex'd he held his devious course,
And sought an oar to match his mighty force.

[68] Phebus Ecbasius, so called, from a Greek verb, that signifies *to disembark*.

There, as he wander'd, chance an ash display'd,
Nor thick with branches, nor oppress'd with shade.
As tapering straight its graceful head it rear'd,
Like a young poplar the fair plant appear'd.
His bow and quiver on the verdant soil
He laid, and cast aside the lion's spoil.
His pond'rous club Alcides first applied,
He shook the stubborn root, from side to side,
With legs diverging as the hero stands,
He stooping grasp'd the stem with both his hands,
Then, strongly press'd with shoulders broad above,
As with the deeply-rooted plant he strove.
It yields—it falls—his vast impetuous sway
The roots and earthy fibres tore away.
As, when Orion holds the wintry sky,
And sudden tempests from their caverns fly,
Incumbent from above the furious blast,
With all its bolts and clasps, uptears the mast.
Again the chief his bow and quiver took;
With puissant hand the massy club he shook;
The lion's hide athwart his shoulders threw;
And hasted to rejoin the gallant crew.
With duteous care and fond attention fraught,
A sacred spring the youthful Hylas sought,
Far from the band. He bears a brazen urn,
For limpid water 'gainst the chief's return;
In order due, that the repast might shine,
Such prompt obedience, gentle youth, was thine.
His childhood thus the hero lov'd to train,
Since first he bore him from his sire's domain.
Alcides' hand depriv'd that sire of life,
A steer for rustic labour caus'd the strife;
Theodamas, a chief of name renown'd,
Among the Dryopes his doom he found.

Amid the labours of the furrow'd field,
The sullen chief refus'd the prize to yield.
The' unbending hero urg'd the stern demand,
For much he sought a contest with the band,
Regardless, as they were, of social ties,
And gods and men accustom'd to despise.
But these details the devious bard mislead;
Pursue we then the stripling o'er the mead.
When to the margin of the fount he came,
That bears among the natives Pegæ's name,
Around the spring, by fate's decree, or chance,
A choir of nymphs entwin'd the mystic dance.
For all the nymphs, that haunt the wood, the cave,
Or their fair limbs in that bright fountain lave,
With dance and choral warblings through the night,
Soothe the fair goddess of the silver light.
From many a woodland haunt, the virgin throng,—
Oread and Dryad, join'd the dance and song.
A nymph, emergent from the crystal flood,
The fair Hydatié, on the margin stood.
She view'd the boy, array'd in youthful charms,
By ev'ry grace; and throbb'd with soft alarms.
The roseat bloom of health his cheek display'd,
Around his form the sweet allurements play'd,
Seen doubly charming by the lunar beam,
That o'er his beauties shot a milder gleam.
Oh how the venom tingled through her breast!
She pants—she faints—with wild desire possess'd.
The youth inclining o'er the fountain bends,
And through the crystal lymph his urn descends.
Cool and translucent as the gushing rill,
With gurgling sound his urn began to fill,
The time was apt, and opportune the place,
She sprang to fold him in a soft embrace,

Eager to print an ardent kiss, and sip
The nectar from his soft and ruby lip.
Her left hand o'er his ivory neck she threw,
And by his elbow, with her right she drew.
Deep plung'd the boy, and scream'd with sudden fear
Distressful notes, that reach'd a single ear.
The son of Elatus[69], as o'er the plain
He wander'd lonely, heard the piteous strain.
To meet Alcides he pursued his way,
Foreboding evil from the chief's delay.
Attracted by the boy's distressful cries,
With haste impetuous to the spring he flies.
As when the savage beast, with hunger bold,
Lur'd by the bleatings of the distant fold,
With headlong rage the hurdled cote assails,
Fierce as he is the bold invader fails;
Enclos'd the shepherds guard their fleecy care,
He pants, he roars, and weary seeks his lare.
Thus Polyphemus rag'd the spring around;
He groans, his clamours thro' the air resound;
But vain his rage, his clamours all are vain,
He turns his steps to seek the social train.
The naked falchion glitters in his hand,
To scare the beasts of prey, the pirate band.
Along the path he wav'd the shining blade,
And soon discern'd Alcides through the shade.
The mournful chance the hero thus express'd,
While groans and pantings shook his lab'ring breast.
'Wretch that I am, by fate ordain'd to rend
With mortal grief the bosom of my friend;
To tell him, what through life he shall deplore,
His darling youth, his Hylas is no more.

[69] Polyphemus.

Whether he died, of savage beasts the prey,
Or roving pirates bore the youth away,
Doubtful the mode, but certain is the grief;
I heard his cries too late to yield relief.'
The bursting sweat, that o'er his temples flow'd,
The mortal anguish of Alcides show'd.
Despair and rage the fatal words inflame;
The vital currents boil within the frame.
The' uprooted ash he hurls away in wrath,
And rushes wild, as chance directs his path.
As when the hornet's sting with fury fills
The mighty bull, he flies the meads and rills
That wander o'er the low and marshy land,
Deserts the herd, nor heeds the rustic band,
Onward he drives—and restless, now the plains
He traverses—now motionless remains,
Rears high the brawny neck, and mighty crest,
And roars tremendous, from a tortur'd breast.
So rag'd the chief; and headlong now he flies,
Now motionless, he rends the air with cries,
The piercing sounds of anguish and despair
Reverberated fill the troubled air.
The rays of morning smote each mountain's brow,
While fresh from heav'n the favouring breezes flow.
The prudent Tiphys bade the train employ
The precious season, and the winds enjoy.
Gladly they hear; and the tall ship ascend,
They heave their anchors, and the sails unbend.
Far from that shore, with canvass swell'd they haste,
And Posidëium's[70] cliff rejoicing pass'd.
Morn from her heav'nly goal with eyelids glad
Return'd, the field with yellow lustre clad;

[70] A cape of Bithynia.

And o'er the mead, with scatter'd dew-drops bright,
Her roseat fingers shed the seeds of light.
The band perceiv'd whom they had left behind
Unwary, and contention fill'd the mind;
Clamours and tumult rose, for they had lost
The best and noblest of the' assembled host.
Then Jason rap'd in mute affliction sate,
Confounded by this stroke of adverse fate;
Such mighty grief his lab'ring thought assail'd,
That, sunk in stupor, all expression fail'd.
But sudden fury Telamon possess'd;
And words reproachful spoke the stormy breast.
'And dost thou calmly sit, with placid mind,
When lost is he, that first of human kind?
No work of chance—I read the dark design.
Thine burning envy, artifice was thine.
Thine heart foretold, that when, their wand'ring o'er,
The hardy Greeks should gain their native shore,
The matchless glories of Alcides' fame
To dark oblivion would consign thy name.
But words are idle—I no more remain
With such a chief, and his deceitful train.'
He ceas'd, and with a bound on Tiphys[71] flies;
While flames of fury lighten from his eyes.
Now back to Mysia—had their course been held;
Tho' waves resisted, and tho' winds repell'd,
But, the twinn'd offspring of the Thracian wind
With stern reproaches check'd his wrathful mind.
Ah, youths ill-fated! they were doom'd to bear,
For these their words, a recompense severe.
Alcides felt, how they had sway'd the band
To leave him there amid a stranger land.

[71] With an intention of forcing him to put back the vessel.

And, as the brothers from the games return'd,
And obsequies, that Pelias slain inurn'd,
In sea-girt Tenos, by his hand they died,
That fatal hand their monument supplied.
Relenting, o'er the dead a mound he rear'd;
Two columns sacred to their fame appear'd;
And one, a prodigy, that sense confounds,
Trembles whene'er the northern blast resounds.
But these events the womb of time conceal'd.
Meantime, amid the furious waves reveal'd,
Glaucus, the prescient son of Nereus, rose;
His bushy head and hairy breast he shows.
Emergent from the deep, with mighty hand,
He grasp'd the keel, and shouted to the band.
'Thwart not the doom of Jove; attempt no more
To bear Alcides to the Pontic shore.
For him in Argos tyrant hate ordains
Twelve conflicts rude, with perils and with pains.
These labours pass'd, he joins his heav'nly sire.
To godhead thus the sons of Jove aspire;
Then seek him not; nor mourn, whom ruling Jove
By earthly suff'rings calls to bliss above.
Nor yet on Polyphemus bend your care;
The gods for him a diff'rent fate prepare,
At Cius' mouths to found the Mysian wall;
On boundless Chalybean plains to fall.
Hylas remains, (the cause for which they rov'd)
A youthful bridegroom by a goddess lov'd.
A depth immense he plung'd to wat'ry caves,
Above in circling eddies foam'd the waves;
The ship sprang forward, as with mighty force
The god descending urg'd her liquid course.
The heroes all rejoic'd—with eager haste
The generous Telamon towards Jason pass'd;

His hand he seiz'd; and with affection press'd,
Embrac'd the chief, and thus his speech address'd:
'O Jason, wilt thou not forgive thy friend,
That, rash and thoughtless, haply might offend?
Grief dictates words injurious and unkind;
Be they forgotten—give them to the wind;
All past resentments, every cause of pain—
No thoughts but those of amity remain.'
The son of Æson prudently replied:
'Harsh were thy words, but rage those words supplied.
A cruel charge! desert the man I lov'd!
But be resentment from my soul remov'd.
Though feeling suffer'd, I can prize thy worth;
'Twas jealous friendship call'd reproaches forth.
Not thine the motives of plebeian strife,
The sordid incidents of vulgar life,
A flock of sheep, or other selfish claim,
That wakes in little minds contention's flame;
And were I wrong'd, thy just and noblest heart
Would prompt for me the same ingenuous part.'
He said—and love succeeds to stern debate,
With spirits harmoniz'd the heroes sate;
The friends, meantime, their destinies attend;
One fated to behold his walls ascend,
And one to meet, upon his native plains,
The dreadful tasks Eurystheus' ire ordains.
The son of Jove his ravish'd Hylas sought,
With furious action, and distemper'd thought;
He calls on Hylas. Unavailing call!
His direful threats the Mysian swains appal.
'Restore him living, or produce him slain;
Or carnage smokes along your ravag'd plain.'

The rulers, to preserve their menac'd land,
With hostages avert his fatal hand;
The Mysian race those solemn pledges bind,
To search incessant till the youth they find.
Ev'n now, where Cius flows, the Mysian throng
For Hylas lost the public search prolong;
And, from those hostages deriv'd of old,
The men of Trachin[72] still the custom hold.
The wind, propitious to the vessel's flight,
Breath'd all the day, and all the cool of night;
But when Aurora broke the bands of sleep
No breeze was stirring o'er the glassy deep.
A rising shore the mariners survey,
A spacious strand outspread within a bay;
Thither, as dawn appear'd, their oars they ply,
Then morn arose, rejoicing ev'ry eye.

[72] A city of Thessaly, founded by Hercules, and from him called Heraclea.

THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

The Argonauts having arrived at the country of the Bebrycians, Amycus, king of that people, challenges them to produce a person able to contend with him in boxing.—Pollux accepts the challenge, and kills his antagonist.—A battle ensues between the Argonauts and Babrycians.—The former kill many of their opponents, and compel the rest to save themselves by flight.—The Argonauts find Phineus deprived of sight, who implores their aid against the Harpies, who used to carry away his food before he could taste it.—Phineus, it seems, knew by prophetic inspiration, long before the arrival of the adventurers, that they were fated to drive away the monsters that persecuted him.—In compliance with his prayers, the sons of Boreas undertake the task, and chase the Harpies to the islands called the Strophades.—Phineus, meantime, explains to the Argonauts the course of their navigation to Colchos.—The sons of Boreas return, and give an account of their pursuit of the Harpies, and how they were prevented from destroying them, by the

interposition of Iris.—Cause of the blindness of Phineus.—Of Cyrene, daughter of Hypseus, and Aristæus, her son by Apollo.—Fables respecting the Etesian winds.—Argonauts pass the Symplegades.—Reach a desert island on the coast of Bithynia.—Phebus appears to them there.—They erect an altar, and worship him by the name of Phebus Eous.—They reach the country of the Mariandyni.—Lycus, king of the district, receives them in the most friendly manner, on account of their having punished his enemy, Amycus.—Here Idmon, the prophet, dies, being wounded by a wild boar; and also Tiphys the pilot.—Ancæus offers his services to preside at the helm, and they are accepted.—The Argonauts pass various places.—Customs and manners of the Chalybes, Mosynæci, and Tibareni.—Fabulous birds in the isle of Mars, expelled by the Argonauts.—The sons of Phryxus, by Chalciope, the daughter of Æetes, who had been shipwrecked on the island, in their passage to Orchomenus, are found there by the Argonauts.—They recognise each other, and proceed to Colchos.

WHERE haughty Amycus possess'd the land,
His spacious stables and his palace stand.
This tyrant a Bithynian nymph, of yore,
Fair Melia, to the god of ocean bore.
Proudest of mortals, his ferocious mind
Establish'd customs hostile to mankind.
In fights of cestus, 'twas his cruel boast,
To foil unhappy men that reach'd the coast;
And many died, for none might thence depart
Without a trial of his strength and art.

As at the ship he question'd their descent,
Their place of birth, and whither they were bent,
With insolent contempt he mark'd the train,
While boastive words his brutal thoughts explain.
'Wanderers of ocean, wretched outcasts, hear
What much imports you, with attentive ear.

Know, by my sovereign pleasure 'tis decreed,
When strangers to Bebrycia's coast proceed,
The bold intruders shall not thence remove,
Ere they my prowess at the cestus prove.
The bravest, therefore, of your number send,
And at the cestus let him here contend;
For, should you dare this ordinance to scorn,
The bitter fruits in common must be borne.'
His vauntive words the Greeks with anger fir'd,
And Pollux chief with generous rage inspir'd.
The champion of the social band he stood—
'Whoe'er thou art, forbear this taunting mood.
Thy threats are needless—we the rule obey—
Accept the combat, then resume our way.
I freely promise to sustain the fight.
Approach; and let me prove thine utmost might.'
Thus he undaunted. At the youth so bold,
The tyrant glar'd—his eyes in fury roll'd.
Pierc'd by the javelin with a madding wound,
The lion thus, whom men and dogs surround,
Compacted circle, rolls his blood-stain'd eyes;
Nor heeds the crowd, but on the hunter flies,
Whose aim, unerring yet imperfect, sped
The wound that fail'd to mix him with the dead.
The son of Tyndarus[1] then laid aside
His mantle soft in brightest tincture dy'd.
From looms of Lemnos the smooth texture came,
The fond memorial of a gentle dame.
Loos'd from the clasps aside the monarch threw
His thick and double cloke of sable hue;
With it his sheephook on the ground he laid,
Knotty and tough, of mountain olive made.

[1] Pollux.

Amid their followers [2], on the tawny sand,
Unlike in size and form, the champions stand.
Round the selected space their eyes they throw;
Their train are seated in a two-fold row.
Tow'ring in horrid strength the monarch stood,
Like fell Typhæus, or that monstrous brood,
Which earth, enrag'd against the pow'rs above,
Produc'd, to wage presumptuous war with Jove.
But Pollux shone like a celestial star
Resplendent through the gloom that shoots afar
The silver shafts serenely bright and fair.
Loose on his shoulders wav'd the shining hair;
Scarce on his cheeks the down of manhood rose,
From his glad eyes a speaking lustre flows;
Yet, in his heart the lion's force was found;
He moves his hands, and meditates a wound,
Doubtful, if yet their pliant strength they hold,
Worn by the toilsome oar, and numb'd by cold.
Far diff'rent Amycus. He stood apart,
And through the youth [3] his glances seem'd to dart.
Athirst for blood, with wishes dire possess'd,
To dash the vital streams from that fair breast.
Lycoreus now, the king's attendant, laid
Before their feet the blood-stain'd gauntlets, made,
Pond'rous and hard, of dry and thickest hide.
The haughty chief these words of scorn applied:—
'Take which thou wilt, and arm thee for the blow;
Without a lot preöption I bestow,
Lest thou hereafter, or thy social band,
Unfairness charge upon the victor's hand.
But arm for fight; that feeling thou may'st tell,
How in preparing gauntlets I excel;

[2] The Argonauts and Bebrycians. [3] Pollux.

And how these hands, without remorse or pause,
The blood-stain'd visage mar, and crashing jaws.'
The noble youth a wordy contest spares;
And gently smiling for the fight prepares.
Without a preference, from earth he caught
The pair of gauntlets chance had near him brought.
Beside him Castor and brave Talaus stand,
They bind the weapons on each valiant hand;
And much encouragement and counsel gave,
Proofs of their love, but needless to the brave.
Aratus next with Ornytus came near,
And arm'd the monarch, for the task of fear.
Ah fools, untaught to pierce the future gloom,
And see that combat seal their master's doom!
Now force to force the combatants apply;
Before their fronts they mix their hands on high.
The king appears a wave abrupt and dark,
That breaks with fury on the lab'ring bark.
Scarce with his skill the' intrepid pilot saves
The vessel buoyant o'er the' enormous waves,
From the deep gulf escap'd, on either hand,
Like walls immense, where heap'd up waters stand.
Thus he, with direful threats, the youth pursued,
Yet, mock'd by skill, no blood his hands imbrued.
No rest—no pause—the youth with vigour bounds
From side to side, and shuns the' impending wounds.
With dauntless courage, and unerring sight,
He weighs and speculates the future fight,
Marks the defences of his giant foe,
The points unguarded, that invite a blow.
There, there he presses, there his hopes are fix'd,
And hands with hands, and blows with blows are mix'd.
As skilful carpenters the wedges drive,
When timbers destin'd for some ship they rive;

With noisy sway the hammer's weight descends;
Wedge after wedge a forceful passage rends;
Stroke follow'd stroke, nor interval, nor pause,
Their cheeks resounded, and their crashing jaws;
And loud their grinding teeth. The fight prevail'd,
Without remission, till their forces fail'd.
With weary pantings painful breath they drew,
Apart they stood, and wip'd the briny dew,
Roll'd copious from their fronts. With doubled rage
Again they close, again in fight engage.
Thus for some heifer, beauty of the mead,
Two bulls to battle rush, with butting head.
Bebrycia's king stood rais'd, in act to wound,
Like those that fell stout oxen to the ground.
With weight enormous a dire stroke he sped,
The youth avoids it with inclining head,
And, bending forward, as the foe advanc'd,
His elbow lightly on the shoulder glanc'd.
Now, closing firmly, knee to knee was press'd,
Arm twin'd with arm, and breast encounter'd breast;
Above his ear, with quick resistless blow,
The gallant stripling smote his giant foe.
The bones within were shatter'd by the wound,
He sunk in anguish, kneeling on the ground.
With loud acclaim, that deed the Minyæ view;
In gushing blood the' indignant spirit flew.
Through the Bebrycians grief and rage prevail'd;
With clubs and lances they the youth assail'd.
Before the youth advanc'd the social band,
Resplendent falchions arm'd each valiant hand.
First Castor smote his victim; from above
The head his weapon to the shoulders clove.
The vast Itomeneus and Mimas felt
What mortal harms the sword of Pollux dealt.

As fiercely rush'd the first, with trampling sound,
Beneath his breast he felt the fatal wound;
And prone in dust lay stretch'd. A rapid blow
On Mimas lighting smote away his brow;
Suffus'd in blood, bare roll'd the ball of sight;
He groan'd, and sunk in everlasting night.
Orides, with injurious daring stor'd,
Servant of Amycus, and like his lord,
Bold Talaus wounded, in the' eventful strife,
Full on the flank, nor reach'd the seat of life.
Beneath his belt he feels the point of brass,
With gliding wound short of the vitals pass.
His mighty club with force Aratus sway'd;
The valiant Iphitus he prostrate laid,
Not destin'd by that stroke to yield his breath,
But he from Clytus' hand receiv'd his death.
With indignation bold Ancæus swell'd;
Aloft a dreadful battle-ax he held,
A bear's black spoils upon his left hand hung,
Himself like lightning mid the crowd he flung.
Athirst for vengeance on the savage band,
The sons of Æäcus[4] beside him stand.
The gallant Jason join'd with these attends,
To swell the chosen group of noble friends.
As when in winter dreary frosts prevail,
The' embattled wolves the crowded fold assail,
The guardian dog, the shepherd's care is vain,
They rush upon the trembling fleecy train;
They prowl with keen and eager search around,
And mark the prey, though numbers choice con-
Fetter'd by fear, and pent in narrow space, [found;
Heap'd on each other fall the bleating race.

[4] Telamon and Peleus.

The heroes thus on the Bebricians flew;
And, heaps on heaps, o'erturn'd the caitiff crew.
As when with piercing smoke the peasants drive
The swarm from cavern'd rock, or straw-built hive,
With fearful murmurs indistinctly loud,
Within their walls the buzzing clusters crowd;
But when the fiery vapours, roll'd amain,
Spread through their cells the suffocating bane,
Stunn'd and confus'd, their citadel they leave,
The sounding air their dusky legions cleave;
Confounded thus the routed myriads spread,
To bear the tidings of their monarch dead.
Struck with the present ill, the thoughtless band
Knew not the full disasters of the land.
To wrap their vineyards and their towns in flame,
Their ancient foes, the Mariandyni[5] came,
Rich mines of steel awake the jealous rage,
And endless wars these hostile neighbours wage.
Thine absence, Amycus, new boldness bred;
Lycus, their chief, their fierce irruption led.
The Minyæ thin the fold, and waste the stall,
And flocks unnumber'd for provision fall.
Then spake some chief, the valiant Greeks among,
'Our arms have quell'd the rude barbarian throng.
But had Alcides in the' adventure shar'd,
The foes this trial of our strength had spar'd;
No terms had been impos'd by lawless might,
No champion then selected for the fight;
But.when their king approach'd with insult fraught,
His club had meekness to their boaster taught.
Alas, unhonour'd, on a distant plain,
The hero wanders, while we plough the main.

[5] A tribe of Bithynia, and neighbours of the Bebrycians.

Too late the Greeks their mighty loss shall know,
When their dire front unwonted perils show.'
He said—but sov'reign Jove had all ordain'd.
The night came on; and there the Greeks remain'd.
To heal their wounds the leach applied his aid,
And pious off'rings to the gods they paid;
Spread for the train, they bid the banquet shine,
And slumber chase with sacrifice and wine.
With tawny laurel then their brows they bind,
And laurel boughs are with their cables twin'd.
In measur'd hymn then Orpheus join'd his voice
To the sweet lyre—the silent shores rejoice:
The list'ning breezes fold the gauzy wing,
While thee Laconian son[6] of Jove they sing.
The morn renew'd the labours of the swain,
To lead his flocks abroad, or till the plain.
The Minyæ from that laurel freed in haste
The ropes that held their tossing vessel fast,
Embark'd on board a portion of their prey,
Then through the Bosporus pursued their way.
In dreadful whirlpools the vex'd deep was curl'd;
And waves on waves, like some tall mountain hurl'd,
Roll'd furious onward, meeting with the sky—
Approaching death glar'd full on ev'ry eye.
While o'er the ship suspended tow'rs the wave,
And ev'ry moment threats a wat'ry grave,
Yet, bursting harmless, shall its rage subside,
If skilful pilotage the vessel guide.
Such skill could Tiphys boast—his friends he bears
Through dangers safe, though not exempt from fears.
With the succeeding morn they gain the land,
And moor their ship on the Bithynian strand.

[6] Laconian son of Jove—Phebus. See the note on this passage.

The wretched Phineus dwelt upon that shore
Who pangs beyond the lot of mortals bore.
From Phebus' bounty all his suff'rings flow'd;
The power of augury the god bestow'd.
Regardless he of vengeance from above,
To men reveal'd the secret will of Jove.
The' offended pow'r inflicts a dreadful doom,
Endless decrepitude in cheerless gloom.
No relish left of health or young delight,
No comfort beaming through the Stygian night;
No viands gratify his famish'd taste,
Though daily care supplied the rich repast.
The natives round his far-fam'd prescience led,
And plenteous off'rings on his board they spread;
But rushing from the clouds the harpy brood
Snatch from his hands and mouth the' untasted food;
With crooked talons, and with rav'ning jaws,
Their inroads knew nor interval nor pause;
Unwearied plunderers. Sometimes nought remain'd,
And sometimes scarce what loathsome life sustain'd,
Reserv'd for torture. Such a stench imbu'd
Whate'er they touch'd, that none might taste the food,
Spar'd by their ravage, or in haunts remain
Stain'd by the visits of that odious train;
Save him by dire necessity confin'd
To bear the' annoyance of their hateful kind.
The wretched sufferer[7] heard the' approaching crowd,
With trampling steps, and mingled voices loud,
And well could read, in oracles of Jove,
Those strangers came his famine to remove.

[7] Phineus.

Rais'd from his couch, a lifeless thing, a shade,
Scarce with his staff the fantome frame he stay'd.
As dark, with tottering limbs, he sought the doors,
His trembling hand the guiding wall explores;
Feeble and old, scarce differing from the dead,
An hideous squalor o'er his body spread.
When to the portal of his house he came,
His knees unnerv'd refus'd to bear his frame.
Distemper'd vision mocks his darkling eyes,
And wheeling earth in giddy circle flies;
Speechless he sinks, absorb'd in trance profound,
The' astonish'd Greeks the wretched man surround.
Regaining breath, the seer prophetic spoke;
Scarce from his breast the feeble accents broke:
'Hear, flower of Greeks! if ye, indeed, are they,
Who, doom'd by Pelias, plough the watery way;
Whom Argo wafts, a gallant band enroll'd,
And Jason leads to win the fleece of gold.
Hail noble strangers, welcome to this heart!
Hail glad event, long promis'd by my art!
Son of Latona[8], thanks to thee be paid;
O king of prophets! I have felt thine aid,
My sole support in anguish to this hour.
By hospitable Jove[9], tremendous pow'r
To him that slights the suppliant's hallow'd claim;
By Phebus; and by matron Juno's name;
The guardian pow'rs that guide you thro' the main,
Oh let not sorrow supplicate in vain!
Despise me not; but, ere ye plough the wave,
A wretch from pangs unutterable save.
'Tis not that furies trample on my head;
That darkling thus I am to pleasure dead;

[8] Apollo. [9] Jupiter Xenius.

That slow decrepit age has made my life
A ling'ring death, with nature still at strife.
Curses on curses, plagues on plagues, I bear;
The Harpies from my mouth the viands tear.
No prudence aid or comfort can supply,
They stoop impetuous rushing through the sky.
I may not 'scape them, present as my thought,
Sudden they come, with dire annoyance fraught;
Of food and social intercourse bereave;
Such poisonous scents the parting furies leave,
Men loathe the relics of their tasted food,
And shun the place polluted by that brood.
An heart of adamant could scarce endure;
Yet I must bear these ills without a cure.
By famine driv'n, though horror chills my breast,
To feed on noxious fragments of their feast.
But late-relenting Jove beholds my grief,
Divine predictions promise sure relief.
The sons of Boreas, sprung from kindred race,
Are doom'd by heav'n the' infernal brood to chase.
If I, indeed, am Phineus, known to fame,
For mighty riches, and an augur's name,
Our lineage if Agenor has supplied,
Or if in Thrace their sister was my bride.'
Agenor's offspring here his voice suppress'd;
Painful emotions fill'd each hero's breast.
Chief Boreas' sons, in pity's gracious mood,
Dry'd up the bursting tears, and near him stood.
Seizing the hand of that most wretched man,
In soothing accents Zetes thus began:—
'Ah wretched, past the lot of human woes!
Why do the gods these direful pangs impose?
What impious action, or what sound profane,
Hath drawn this vengeance from the heav'nly train?

Supremely gifted with prophetic skill,
Say, hast thou contraven'd the' eternal will?
Relief from us thou shalt not vainly ask,
If Heav'n, indeed, hath call'd us to the task.
Nor difficult is it, for man, to read [deed.
When Heav'n, in wrath, would scourge the' ungodly
Much as we pity thy distressful state,
We rush not blindly on immortal hate;
Much as we wish the harpy brood to chase,
We wage not war with the celestial race.
Swear to us then, we shall not anger Jove,
Or draw down vengeance from the pow'rs above.'
  Full on his front the sage expanded wide
His eyeballs 'reft of day, and thus replied.
'No more, my son. Thy pious fear resign,
Thou, Phebus, donor of my skill divine,
Be witness!—and my present wretched state,
And these dark eyes for ever clos'd by fate!
Be witness for me all ye pow'rs below!
And may my shade nor peace nor respite know!
If false this oath, that you offend not Jove,
You draw no vengeance from the powers above.'
  The generous youths upon his oath rely,
The hard achievement they resolve to try.
Meantime, the juniors of the band, with haste,
To cheer the prophet furnish the repast,
A parting spoil to gorge the harpy train.
The sons of Boreas [10] nigh the board remain,
With falchions to repel the' accursed brood;
And scarcely had the prophet touch'd the food,
They rushing sudden from the darken'd air,
Swift as the whirlwind's blast, or lightning's glare,

[10] Calais and Zetes.

With sounding pinions, and with fearful cry,
Stoop from the clouds, and on the viands fly.
The gallant youths, undaunted at the view,
With threat'ning shouts upon the monsters flew;
With keen dispatch the shrieking monsters fed,
Consum'd the viands, and o'er ocean fled:
As, vanishing from sight, aloft they rose,
Diffus'd around the' infectious odour flows.
The youths pursued them with incessant flight,
For Jove infus'd unconquerable might;
And close behind their falchions they display'd,
But vain the chase had Jove withheld his aid.
For when they sought the prophet, or withdrew,
More swift than Zephyr's blast the Harpies flew.
As when with eager speed sagacious hounds
The wooded valley trace, or forest bounds,
And see the mountain goats, or branching deer,
Fly full in view upon the wings of fear,
Stretch'd at full speed they follow close behind;
They think to seize the prey; they champ the wind.
The plumy brethren thus pursued the chase,
With hands outstretch'd to grasp that hateful race;
And now, and now they aim'd a mortal blow,
In heaven's despite they had subdued the foe,
On the Plotæan isles their swords had freed
Abhorrent earth of that detested breed;
But Iris swift, who made these birds her care,
From heav'n observant cut the yielding air;
She check'd the youths with monitory words.
'O sons of Boreas, cease; withhold your swords;
For know, the fates prohibit mortal arm
These huntress dogs of sovereign Jove to harm.
Their dire approach no more shall Phineus feel;
Most solemn oaths this peaceful compact seal.'

She said—and swore by Styx, a sound of fear,
Tremendous oath, that all the gods revere.
'That never more (so destinies ordain)
Should Phineus suffer from the harpy train.'
Confiding in that oath the youths return.
Hence have those isles their appellation borne,
Of Strophades: a name that still remains,
And memory of the past event maintains.
Then, parting, Iris soar'd, on wings sublime,
To splendid mansions, in the starry clime;
The Harpies fled to Crete, where Minos reign'd,
And hid from mortal ken in caverns deep remain'd.
The Grecian leaders pious cares engage;
Lustrations purify the darkling sage,
Whose frame neglected squalid filth o'erspread.
The chosen victims for the gods they led,
With care selected from Bebrycia's spoil;
Then spread the feast, more welcome after toil.
In Phineus' halls the banquet they prepar'd,
And with the chiefs the noble sufferer shar'd;
Eager he shar'd, and these returning gleams
Of ease and comfort seem'd but blissful dreams.
Now, fully satisfied with food and wine,
Sleep fled the band till morn began to shine.
With anxious heart for Boreas' sons they wait,
Meanwhile the seer unfolds the book of fate.
He sate before the hearth. Around, the youth
Bend forward, and imbibe prophetic truth;
What various incidents their course attend,
What toils await them, what propitious end.
'Young heros learn. Not all 'tis given to know;
But what the gods allow my tongue shall show.
In Phineus, by prophetic gifts destroy'd,
Behold the doom of prescience ill employ'd.

No more this rash irrev'rent tongue reveals
What heaven, for wisest purposes, conceals.
In dark uncertainty while mortals rove,
They learn reliance on the powers above.
When first from hence your parting course you steer,
Within a strait Cyanea's rocks appear.
Arduous the task through these your way to keep,
Unstay'd, unrooted, wand'ring in the deep.
Ofttimes they rush, with front to front oppos'd,
And, clashing dreadful, both in one are clos'd.
O'er their broad back, roll'd high, with thund'ring sound,
The breakers swell, the shores rebellow round.
Now mark my counsels, if the gods you fear;
Nor blindly rush when peril is so near,
Lest youthful ardour, with presumptuous force,
On death precipitate your fatal course.
First, let a dove the dangerous passage try.
If through the rocks unhurt she chance to fly,
And reach the sea beyond with prosp'rous flight,
Then forward rush, then ply your oars with might;
With manly vigour plough the foaming wave;
Strength more than prayer avails, the bark to save.
Not that I bid you slight the heavenly powers;
But each exertion has its proper hours.
In safe untroubled times let prayer precede;
But perils ask some energetic deed.
Crush'd in her midway flight if fails the dove,
Turn, backward turn, nor tempt the powers above.
Else, though your ship were form'd of solid steel,
From closing rocks a dreadful death ye feel.
Ah wretched, if ye slight my friendly zeal,
Or doubt the truths my warning lips reveal!

No: did the gods pursue with tenfold hate
This head accurs'd, I speak the doom of fate;
Take then the dove, precursor of your way,
Nor think to thwart the gods with mortal sway.
Events must follow as the fates ordain;
But through the rocks a passage should ye gain,
Bithynian shores upon the right hand keep,
Avoid the land, and navigate the deep,
Until you pass where Rheba's [11] torrent roars,
And circle in your course the gloomy shores.
Where Thynia's island shall salute your eyes,
The station safe to shelter vessels lies.
As onward thence the voyage ye pursue,
Full opposite a coast appears in view,
Not far remote from Thynia's sea-girt strand;
The Mariandyni cultivate that land.
There down to Tartarus a passage tends,
And Acheron's projecting shore ascends,
Where gulfy Acheron the hill divides,
Through deep ravines it rushes to the tides.
Thence to the Paphlagonian seats ye steer,
With gentle swell, where clust'ring hills appear;
In distant ages Pelops rul'd that coast,
And still a kindred stock the people boast.
Turn'd to the wintry site, and northern Bear,
A promontory's steepy cliffs appear.
Carambis, by the native tribes 'tis nam'd;
For ever buffeted by blasts untam'd;
So far it runs, projecting through the deeps,
So high in air its stormy head it keeps.
This having compass'd, a long shore extends,
Where prominent the bank of Halys bends:

[11] For some account of the places and rivers here mentioned, see the notes at the end.

With roar tremendous roll'd along the plain,
He disembogues his waters in the main;
And near, a minor torrent, Iris [12] roars,
In foaming eddies whitening to the shores.
As, pressing onward, ye pursue your way,
A stretching headland forms an ample bay;
There an extent of soil Thermodon laves,
And hastes to mingle with the placid waves.
Beneath Themiscyreum's jutting head,
The shelter'd waves their glassy mirror spread.
In order next the plain of Doias lies;
Three Amazonian towns adjacent rise.
The forges, then, that steely works prepare,
At distance seen diffuse a ruddy glare.
The Chalybes, a much enduring kind,
Turn the rough soil, the stubborn ore to find.
Where Genetæan cliffs o'erhang the main,
And hospitable Jove unfolds his fane,
The Tibareni hold the pastures fair,
Rich in the numbers of their fleecy care.
A woody region skirts the mountain side,
And at its foot the Mossynæci bide.
This region having pass'd, your sails and oars
Shall bear you to an isle with craggy shores,
By all deserted, save a countless swarm
Of rav'nous birds, ill-omen'd and deform.
Be it your earliest care, with urgent toil,
From these foul guests to purify the soil.
There, rais'd of stone by Amazonian hands,
To Mars, the homicide, a temple stands,
On warfare bound Otrera, valiant dame,
With bold Antiopé uprear'd the frame.

[12] See notes at the end.

There, from an unexpected source of aid,
The deep, shall hope and safety be display'd.
But, whither have I stray'd? the' admonish'd breast
Feels the past anguish, and conceals the rest.
Borne onward thence, the continent ye gain.
The Philyrean race possess the plain;
The seats beyond them the Macrones hold.
Next the Bechiri come, in numbers bold.
The' adjacent regions the Sapires claim;
Near them Bizeres dwell, a kindred name.
Last come the Colchians, fam'd for warlike deed.
Still hold your ship, and through the deep proceed;
The deep recesses of the gulf explore;
The bounds remote of the Cytæan [13] shore;
The Amarantine hills, and Circe's plain,
Where Phasis [14] rolls in whirlpools to the main.
As mounting thence against the stream ye tend,
Full in your view the Colchian towers ascend,
There shall the grove of Mars its gloom unfold,
Where a tall beech sustains the fleece of gold.
A monstrous dragon, object of affright,
For ever holds that treasure in his sight.
Slumber, alike in light and darkness, flies,
Nor tames his vigilance, nor seals his eyes.'
He ceas'd. Amazement fill d the listening throng,
With terror mix'd. Sad was the pause and long.
A thousand anxious cares their chief surround;
For dire the perils that in prospect frown'd.
Thus he: 'O prophet! well hast thou pourtray'd
The dreadful obstacles before us laid;
Well hast thou taught what trial to prepare,
Through those fell rocks ere we the passage dare.

[13] Cytæan——Colchian.
[14] Phasis, a river of Colchis.

But if (all dangers pass'd) the fates ordain
That homeward I should lead this gallant train,
Thy treasur'd counsels I would gladly bear,
My future voyage through the deep to steer.
An arduous enterprise awaits my hand,
Unskilful chief of an unskilful band.
The Colchian shores our patient search confound,
So distant set on earth's remotest bound.'
He ceas'd—and thus the venerable seer:
'Oh son, when thou shalt pass those rocks of fear,
With mind elated, in thyself confide;
For what remains, a god shall be thy guide.
Guides you shall find, as far as Æa's [15] wall;
Care of your voyage thence on heaven will fall.
But mark, my friends, to guard from future harms,
How much depends upon the queen of charms.
Her artful aid, her blandishments you need,
To bid your daring and your toils succeed.
Go, generous youths, your destiny pursue.
Inquire no more, 'tis hid from mortal view.'
Agenor's offspring [16] ended. The wing'd pair [17],
On sounding plumes, came rushing through the air.
The threshold scarce they touch'd with nimble feet,
The' heroic band rush'd forth the youths to greet.
Then Zetes hastes the' inquiring crowd to teach,
Though weary pantings interrupt his speech;
How far from thence the Harpies they pursued;
How Iris came to save the ravening brood;
Yet, pitying Phineus, how, by Styx she swore,
The hateful race should torture him no more;

[15] Æa, the capital city of Colchos, and residence of Æetes.
[16] Phineus. [17] Calais and Zetes.

And how the' ill-omen'd birds (as terror wrought)
The caverns deep of Cretan mountains sought.
The' assembled heroes were with pleasure fill'd;
Unwonted joy the soul of Phineus thrill'd.
With warm affection to the' unhappy man,
In soothing accents Jason thus began:
'Some pitying god, O Phineus, mark'd thy grief,
And urg'd our sails from far to thy relief;
That Boreas' sons might chase thy plagues away,
Oh could we but restore thy visual ray!
Scarce could the joys of home my soul delight,
Like thy recovery of ravish'd sight.'
But Phineus answer'd, with a downcast brow,
'Tis pass'd—not heaven could remedy bestow;
For, wither'd from their orbs the balls of sight,
Tell me no more to hope for cheering light.
No—let your friendship pray the gods to send
A speedy transit, and a peaceful end;
Then boundless joys of vision shall be mine,
Where fields of bliss in purest ether shine.'
Alternate thus they listen'd and they spoke,
Till ruddy morning on their converse broke.
Round Phineus day convok'd a mingled train,
With wonted aid, from all the' adjacent plain.
Without distinction, through the' assembled band,
Of who bestow'd, or came with niggard hand,
With tongue inspir'd, the reverend prophet told
Such truths as heaven allow'd him to unfold;
Their griefs to comfort, or their weakness aid;
And grateful love the sacred truths repay'd.
Parebius with the' observant throng was near,
A name above the rest to Phineus dear,
Well pleas'd the' assembled heroes to behold,
Since, told by Phineus, he had learn'd of old,

That led from Greece a long predestin'd race,
To Colchos bound, the harpy brood should chase;
Then, borne to Thynis, mid the wat'ry roar,
Should bind their cables to the rocky shore.
The rev'rend prophet now dispatch'd the rest
With prudent words, that calm'd each anxious breast;
He bids Parebius only of the train,
Selected favourite, with the chiefs remain,
And seek the folds, obedient to his voice,
Among the sheep, to cull the prime and choice.
As from the' abode, on this behest, he ran,
Thus mildly to the Greeks the seer began.
'Not all mankind, my friends, in violence trust,
Nor are they all ungrateful and unjust.
In him, that parted hence [18], a proof we find,
Of virtuous nature, and the grateful mind.
Worn out with toils, the mark of fortune's hate,
Hither he came to learn his future fate.
From toil no respite, no release from pains,
His father's sins the victim wretch sustains.
As in the mountain, with repeated stroke,
The churlish father fell'd the stubborn oak,
Impious he scorn'd the Hamadryad's pray'r,
And smote the tree coeval with the fair,
With streaming tears she pleads, and suppliant strain,
To that unfeeling churl, but pleads in vain.
"Oh rustic stay, nor wound the hallow'd rind,
For ages with that stem I live entwin'd."
With pride of brutal strength his bosom swell'd,
He rais'd his cruel arm, the trunk he fell'd
In cruel hour. For him and his remain
Unfruitful labour, poverty, and pain.

[18] Parebius.

The wretched son resorted to my skill,
Soon I perceiv'd the fatal cause of ill.
The guilt his father had incurr'd, to chase,
I bade his pious hands an altar place,
Sacred to her, the' offended Thynian maid[19],
Where due oblations should for sin be paid.
By me to shun the destin'd sorrows taught,
Deep sunk the benefit in grateful thought;
And never since hath his attention slept,
Or cold oblivion o'er his kindness crept.
Prop of debility, of darkness guide,
With what reluctance does he leave my side!'
He ceas'd: the good Parebius was at hand,
Two sheep he brought, selected for the band.
Then Phineus bids for sacrifice prepare;
With Jason, Boreas' offspring claim that care.
To Phebus, chief of that prophetic throng,
They breathe the pray'r, and raise the pious song.
The victims on the hearth they duly slay,
As broad and glorious rose the disk of day.
The juniors for the train the banquet crown'd,
And glad repast and temperate bowls went round;
The banquet done, the train divided sleep,
Some in the dwelling, some beside the deep.
With rising morn arose the' Etesian gales,
The breath of Jove, to fan the hills and vales.
A virgin life the nymph Cyrene led,
Where stagnant waters of Peneüs[20] spread.
Mid harmless men of the far distant age,
Her thoughts, her cares, the fleecy tribe engage.
As with her flocks along the bank she stray'd,
Apollo saw, and bore away the maid.

[19] The Hamadryade.
[20] Peneüs, a river of Thessaly.

Far from Æmonia's[21] bounds the prize he bore;
He cross'd the main, and sought the Libyan shore,
And native nymphs around Myrtusa's steep.
He bade the train the lovely mourner keep.
Not long averse the lovely mourner frown'd;
A beauteous boy their mutual wishes crown'd.
His parents Aristæus call'd the child,
Agreus and Nomius, by the' Æmonians styl'd.
The' enamour'd god to his fair mistress yields
Immortal youth, a huntress of the fields.
To Chiron's hand the tender babe he gave,
The centaur bred him in his secret cave.
The goddess muse in nuptial union sought
His graceful youth, and her endowments taught,
The pow'r of healing, and the piercing ken,
That through the future reads the doom of men.
The muses bade him guard their fleecy care,
In Athamantian plains of Pthia fair.
Where stately Othrys waves his shady brow,
And, bright Apidanus, thy currents flow,
When Sirius rear'd in Heav'n his baleful head,
And o'er the Cyclades his fury shed,
With fiery shafts he parch'd the gaping plain,
And plague and famine hover'd in his train.
The wretched habitants relief demand,
By Phebus warn'd, from Aristæus' hand.
The' obedient son his father's mandate hears;
Counsel and succour he from Pthia bears.
Assembled at his call, Lycaon's race,
Parrhasian tribes, their seats in Coos[22] place.

[21] Thessaly was so called. For the remaining names of persons and places, see the notes at the end.

[22] An island.

He rear'd an altar for Icmæan [23] Jove,
Who sends the gladdening moisture from above.
High on the hills the sacrifices gleam,
To Saturn's son, and the red Dog-star's beam.
Hence forty days along the hills and vales,
By Jove's decree, the' Etesian breeze prevails.
And Coos hence the custom still retains,
That ere the Dog-star in the' ascendant reigns,
The priest, with sacrifice and solemn rite,
Averts the furies, of his baneful light.
Thus fable sings. But, by that breeze detain'd,
The chiefs reluctant on the coast remain'd.
All through that day their ship the natives sought,
And gifts immense of amity they brought,
The work of Phineus, who, with grateful mind,
To friendly feelings all the race inclin'd.
Along the limit of the sea-girt strand,
To twice six deities, with pious hand,
The Greeks an altar rear; the' oblations lay;
Then seize their oars, to plough the wat'ry way.
Nor did the train neglect the turtle-dove,
The harbinger of safety from above;
As with a band Euphemus check'd her flight,
She flutter'd round his hand on pinions light.
Now had they loos'd their cables from the shore.
Minerva mark'd them mid the wat'ry roar.
Her course, with eager haste, the goddess bends;
And soon a bright and flitting cloud ascends.
Though light as gossamer it seem'd to shine,
That airy fleece supports the freight divine.
Her flight she guided to the Pontic plain,
With thoughts propitious to the' advent'rous train.

[23] From a Greek word, signifying moisture.

As when an exile, distant far from home,
(Thus hapless men are often doom'd to roam)
In wishes to the natal spot will fly,
And land and seas are spread to fancy's eye;
A moment passes o'er the march of years,
And space contracts, and distance disappears;
Now here, now there, the swift ideas roll,
And travel with a bound, from pole to pole;
Swift flew the goddess; and from air descends,
Where Thynis' shores the Euxine billows rends.
The mouth of that dire strait[24] the heroes found;
Tremendous rocks the winding passage bound.
Its course beneath an adverse current held,
With foamy whirlpools; and the ship repell'd.
Though bold the' attempt, surpassing human force,
The hardy band pursue their desp'rate course.
Now, closing with a crash, and thund'ring sound,
The rushing rocks the startled ear astound,
Continuous, deaf'ning. The surrounding shore,
With dismal peal, reverberates the roar.
Then, forward to the prow Euphemus sprung,
While fluttering from his hand the turtle hung.
On Tiphys' skill their throbbing hearts relied.
Each to his oar his utmost strength applied;
In station apt, that vigour join'd with art
Between the rocks should bid the vessel dart.
For the last time[25] the rocks their jaws expand,
As circling round them sail'd the' advent'rous band.
Euphemus loos'd the bird of pinions light;
With heads uprais'd the sailors mark her flight,
And wait the' event with mingled hope and dread,
As through the pass on airy plumes she sped,

[24] Between the Symplegades.

[25] Because they were destined to become fixed afterwards.

Then furious rushing through the dark profound,
The rocks together crash'd with horrid sound.
Dash'd in a thick and gloomy cloud, the spray,
To heav'n ascending, blurs the face of day.
Through the vex'd air the dismal tempest raves,
Beneath the pointed rocks, the groaning caves
With hollow bellowings gorge the waves within,
Then back return them with appalling din.
High o'er the boiling deep the foam is hurl'd,
In eddies caught the giddy bark is whirl'd.
Safe through the closing rocks the turtle springs,
But shorn of plumage from her tail and wings.
The mariners rejoice, with eager cry,
And Tiphys shouts: 'Your oars with vigour ply,
Again a pass the parting rocks expand.'
But, as they row'd, what terror seiz'd the band!
When backward currents, with returning roar,
Far, far within the rocks the vessel bore;
Who can express the measure of their dread!
Then certain death seem'd hovering o'er each head.
On either hand the dreary deep appear'd;
Its mountain head a sudden billow rear'd,
And, rolling on, with gloomy terror swell'd,
Against the ship the wat'ry mass impell'd.
With heads inclin'd the sailors downward bent,
As death approach'd them in its dire descent;
But Tiphys, at the helm, with watchful skill,
And dexterous hand, anticipates that ill.
The rower's energy the ship depress'd;
It ceas'd: she mounted on the billow's breast.
Beneath the keel the billow spent its force;
Buoy'd o'er the rocks, the bark pursued her course
Behind, the wave impell'd her on her way,
Ensuring safety, as it caus'd dismay.

From bank to bank, with exhortations loud,
To ply their oars, Euphemus urg'd the crowd.
The crew, with shouts and eager toil, replied;
And vigorous efforts cut the foamy tide.
Far as a youthful crew [26], with lab'ring oars,
Speed, at a stroke, the vessel from the shores,
That distance twice their bark the Minyæ send [27];
Their oars, conflicting with the billows, bend
With arms robust, as archers bend the bow,
To wing the feather'd mischief on the foe.
Then, following close, the wave abrupt and steep
Breaks o'er the deck, and mingles with the deep.
As rolls the cylinder along the plain,
The ship was drifted o'er the saucy main,
Forward she scuds, the wat'ry menace braves,
And to the deep pursues the refluent waves.
But adverse currents soon, with eddying shocks,
Detain her midway 'twixt the fatal rocks;
Fast rooted in that dark abyss of fear,
Closing again, the rocks rebellow near.
Then to their succour came the blue-ey'd maid;
The rocks, with force divine, her left-hand stay'd;

[26] It seems, that the poet means to illustrate the rapidity with which the Argo was urged on by her crew; he says, that the rowers at every stroke gave her twice as much way, as another vessel would have made at the same time. See Valerius Flaccus, lib. 4. v. 650.

[27] Should a different version be preferred, the lines may be rendered thus:

> Far as with lab'ring oars, and youthful force,
> Each stroke impell'd the vessel on her course,
> Back twice that space the refluent billows tend.—

Supported by her right the bark advanc'd,
And o'er the waters like an arrow glanc'd;
Yet, as her stern receiv'd the parting stroke,
The sculptur'd ornaments the conflict broke.
Triumphant o'er the waves the vessel rode:
The goddess[28] sought the starry-pav'd abode.
Fast rooted in the deep the rocks remain'd,
For ever fix'd, by destiny ordain'd,
When once a mortal birth the straits had pass'd,
No more to wander in the briny vast.—
The hardy train respire from mortal dread;
Joyful they see the clear horizon spread:
Around their hearts a lively transport play'd;
They seem'd deliver'd from the Stygian shade.
With thoughts elate they view'd the ocean round,
A glorious vast expanse without a bound.
Then Tiphys spake: 'Undaunted we proceed;
If in the past we may the future read.
The gods assure the safety of this band.
I hail the guidance of Minerva's hand.
When Argus labour'd at the vessel's frame,
O'er it the goddess breath'd instinctive flame.
And hence the ship inviolate shall sail,
O'er every danger hence the crew prevail.
Escap'd these rocks, press on, where Pelias sends.
No peril, Jason, like the past impends.
This band successful toils and struggles wait;
If Phineus truly could interpret fate.'
He ceas'd: and urging through the wat'ry roar
The rapid vessel pass'd Bithynia's shore.
The chief[29] replied, with soft and soothing words:
'How ill this language with my grief accords!

[28] Minerva. [29] Jason.

No gentle voice my feelings can deceive;
The' irreparable fault no chance retrieve.
That tyrant's mandate why did I obey,
And lead these heroes through this desp'rate way?
No; death in direst form I should have borne,
Ere I complied, and limb from limb been torn.
For them I sink o'erwhelm'd in deep despair,
I feel the' intolerable weight of care.
By sea, the billows roll untimely fate;
By land, on shores unknown what terrors wait.
There beasts of prey, there savage men abound,
And force and fraud with mingled fears confound.
These thoughts by day with anguish fill my breast,
These thoughts by night deprive my couch of rest.
Since first my cause convok'd this suff'ring train,
To thee full easy is the' intrepid strain;
Not hard the task a confidence to show,
When care for self is all the care we know.
Myself I heed not, but for him, for thee,
For all the heroes that around I see;
For all I tremble lest my cares should fail,
In safety home to guide the flying sail.'

His thoughts were diff'rent; but with prudent art,
He prob'd the firmness of each gallant heart.
The heroes answer'd with a loud acclaim,
And words expressive of a generous flame.
As forth the peals of manly ardour broke,
Their leader's soul rejoic'd, and thus he spoke:

'O friends! your spirits have elated mine;
No task I fear, no conflict I decline;
I lead undaunted your advent'rous way,
Though hell should gape our progress to delay.
In perils prov'd, your bright heroic fire
Shall warm the cold, the' inanimate inspire;

Here have our sufferings reach'd their utmost bound,
And danger here in the worst form we found;
No peril like the past this train awaits,
If Phineus truly has reveal'd the fates.'
Silence ensued, the lab'ring oars they plied,
The vessel swiftly cut the yielding tide.
Where the swift Rheba [30] disembogues they fled,
And where Colone [31] lifts the rocky head,
Their course beneath Melæna's cliffs they keep,
Where nodding forests blacken o'er the deep.
Then pass where Phillis [32] mingles with the wave,
The roofs that shelter once to Phryxus gave.
As from Orchomenus to Colchos' shore,
The fabled ram the' illustrious exile bore;
Here on his way, reception fair he found,
When Dipsacus the peaceful mansion own'd,
Whose lineage from a river god was drawn,
Borne by a nymph presiding o'er the lawn.
No passions rude their gentle offspring felt,
A blameless rustic with the nymph he dwelt:
Where roll'd his father's stream through meadows fair,
The bow'r he trimm'd, and fed the fleecy care.
The fane they pass'd rear'd by his pious hand,
The river's spacious banks, the fertile land.
While day remains, their steady course they keep
Where Calpis [33] rolls majestically deep:
Nor paus'd the heroes with declining light,
The labouring oars resounded through the night.

[30] A river of Bithynia.

[31] A cliff near the river Lycus.

[32] A river of Bithynia.

[33] A river which flowed between Chalcedon and Heraclea.

In the deep furrow'd land when oxen toil,
And straining cleave the moist and heavy soil,
Their sides and necks the streams of sweat o'erflow,
Beneath the yoke askance their eyes they throw,
Their fiery breath ascends with panting sound,
The streams are roll'd in misty volumes round,
Their hoofs deep printed in the stubborn clay,
Patient they labour through the live-long day;
Thus through the deep their oars the Minyæ drew,
While streams of sweat their ardent limbs bedew.
Her cheering visit still the morn delay'd,
Yet not unbroken lay the nightly shade.
A tender lustre, glimm'ring through the sky,
With doubtful dawn, perplex'd the longing eye.
'Twas then their vessel, swiftly dash'd along,
Full on an island bore the weary throng.
A station dreary, desolate and wild,
The shores of Thynias by the sailors styl'd;
Yet, desert as it was, the' o'erlabour'd band
With joyful footsteps press'd the welcome sand.
The god of day, return'd from Lycia's plain,
Appear'd from far to seek the northern train [34].
His beauteous cheeks with youth immortal glow'd,
In radiant gold his curling tresses flow'd;
The graceful ringlets o'er each shoulder rov'd,
Or floated on the breeze, whene'er he mov'd;
His left hand wav'd a bow of silver bright,
That in its motion glanc'd a dazzling light;
The quiver from his iv'ry neck depends,
And stor'd with arrows down his back descends.
All nature felt the presence of the god;
That island rock'd, and trembled, where he trod.

34 The Hyperboreans.

The groaning deep in larger billows swell'd,
With awe profound the race of men beheld.
None dar'd his radiant countenance survey,
Or meet those eyes, that shot refulgent day;
To Pontus through the distant air he went,
All hearts ador'd, all heads in rev'rence bent.
A mute amazement long the train possess'd,
Then Orpheus late the wond'ring chiefs address'd:
'Henceforth this isle the sacred station call
Of orient Phœbus [35], here reveal'd to all;
When rising dawn the midnight shadows chas'd,
Here let his altar on the shore be plac'd.
To Phœbus here perform your pious vows,
With such oblations as the time allows:
Hereafter should his favour guard this train,
And lead us safely to Hæmonia's plain [36];
The thighs of goats his altars then shall find,
Best offring now, an unpolluted mind.'
He spake, they rais'd an altar's hasty pile,
With rolling stones collected through that isle:
The timid fawns and mountain goats they chase,
Nurs'd in the woodlands of that savage place.
The hunter's toil Latona's offspring crown'd,
The votive thighs the double cawls surround.
O'er these upon the casual altar laid,
They pray to Phœbus, and invoke his aid.
'O source illustrious of each orient ray,
Benignant giver of the gladsome day!'
In active measures round the sacred blaze
The choir they lead, and Io Pæans raise;
Æagrus' hallow'd son [37], amid the throng,
Tunes to the Thracian lyre melodious song:

[35] Phœbus Eous. [36] Another name for Thessaly.
[37] Orpheus.

'By Phœbus' shafts how monster Python fell,
Where steep Parnassus' rocky summits swell.
Ere his smooth cheeks the youthful down display'd,
While yet unshorn the golden tresses stray'd.
Oh pardon! sure thy bright and precious hair
Flows still unshorn, nor hand profane may dare
To touch the sacred honours of the head.
Thy beauteous parent only, as they spread,
Daughter of Cæus, may, with hands divine,
Approach the locks where streaming glories shine.
Thy daughters, Plistus[38], oft amid the fight,
Corycian nymphs awak'd his infant might;
Then Io, Io, echoed o'er the plain, [retain.'
And still Apollo's hymns the' enlivening sound
Such was that hymn. Now ceas'd the choral strain,
With due libations then the puissant train,
By solemn oath their mutual aid combin'd;
One cause, one strength, and one according mind.
The sacred things they touch'd with pious hands;
And still preserv'd the reverend custom stands.
And long, in witness of their union vow'd,
Succeeding times the fane of Concord show'd,
Rais'd by the chiefs to the benignant pow'r,
Whose influence govern'd in that solemn hour.
The third fair morn display'd her roseate smile,
And vigorous zephyrs bore them from that isle.
Then opposite Sangarius[39] they descried,
On verdant plains where Mariandyni bide:
There Lycus[40] to the sea his current leads,
And there her stagnant lake Anthemois spreads.
These full in view with swelling sails they pass'd,
All night continuous howl'd the savage blast;

[38] A river of Delphi. [39] A river of Phrygia.
[40] A river flowing through the region of the Mariandyni.

The straining timbers with the whirlwind groan'd,
And through the shrouds the stormy dæmons moan'd.
As dawn approach'd the storm was lull'd to sleep,
Gladly they gain'd that Acherusian steep.
Towering the cliffs precipitous arise,
And safe below the tranquil harbour lies,
Forward it looks to the Bithynian wave;
The rocks beneath the dashing billows lave:
With growth redundant on its misty head,
Enormous planes their dusky foliage spread.
From thence a dark and hollow glen descends,
Indented deep, and to the mainland tends;
The dismal cave of Orcus there is found,
That black o'erhanging rocks and woods surround.
With chilling influence deadly vapours rise
Unceasing from its mouth, and blot the skies;
A cold ungenial air prevails around,
And hoary frosts o'erspread the sterile ground:
Scarce, when the shafts of noontide glare are felt,
Their icy chains with transient mildness melt.
No silence that tremendous region knows
Friendly to thought, or soft and sweet repose;
But toiling ever peals the briny vast,
And howls the forest bending to the blast.
The mouths of Acheron incessant roar,
Where, from the steep, he bellows to the shore;
Its eastern bound, as raging in his course,
He tears the gulfy rock with headlong force.
But after times a diff'rent name bestow'd,
The Soönautes[41], to the deep he flow'd;
Their sails Nisæan Megarensians bore,
Where Mariandyni held the distant shore.

[41] This name denotes the preserver of sailors

A shelter from the tempest here they found,
And hence, the stream that appellation crown'd.
Now pass'd the promontory full in view,
O'er the calm wave the Greeks their way pursue;
Then Lycus mark'd them, ruler of that land,
The Mariandyni mark'd the gallant band.
And well 'twas known, o'er that exulting plain,
What hands the tyrant Amycus had slain;
Before the Minyæ spread the welcome fame,
Pledge and assurance of a social aim.
Round Pollux from their homes the natives flow,
And honours destin'd for the gods bestow;
In conflict with the' unjust Bebrycians tir'd,
From wars disastrous gladly they respir'd.
To Lycus' royal seat the crowd repair,
And crown the banquet with reception fair:
The son of Æson, at the royal bow'r,
In pleasing converse pass'd the social hour:
'Of Pelias' mandate, his companion's names,
Their soft adventures with the Lemnian dames,
How fatal error sway'd the Dolian train,
And Cizycus fell breathless on the plain.
Of great Alcides, how their band was 'reft,
On Mysian plains by inadvertence left,
How Glaucus op'd the future to their view,
How the Bebrycians with their king they slew.
To Phineus then the prompt narration roll'd,
What pangs he suffer'd, and what fates foretold,
How teem'd the floating rocks with wild affright,
The glorious vision of the god of light.'
The tale with pleasure fill'd the monarch's mind;
Yet much he mourn'd Alcides left behind.
And thus among the' assembled chiefs began,
'What loss, my friends, is that unequall'd man?

Through perils strange to Colchos while you rove,
His puissant aid a tow'r of strength might prove.
I knew him, not by distant sounds of fame,
But in these halls to Dascylus he came,
My royal sire, when to his wide domain
By land he pass'd from Lydia's wealthy plain;
And bore triumphant, his ninth labour done,
That dangerous prize, the warlike virgin's zone;
Fairest Hippolita [42] that trophy own'd;
The down of manhood scarce my cheeks had crown'd.
There for my brother Priolaus, slain
In hardy conflict with the Mysian train,
A youth yet mourn'd by all the native throng,
In warbled dirge, and elegiac song,
The games were held. The cestus arm'd his hand;
And Titias sunk extended on the sand,
A mighty man in strength and manly grace,
Superior to the heroes of his race.
The victor's gauntlets were with blood imbru'd,
The shatter'd teeth were on the ground bestrew'd.
He to my father's sway the Mysians brought,
The bordering Phrygians were subjection taught:
And all that region the Bithynians till,
To Rheba's current [43], and Colone's hill.
From Pelops sprung the Paphlagonian yields,
Where deep Billæus dashes round the fields.
But when Alcides was remov'd from sight,
Fierce Amycus, injurious in his might,
The savage tyrant of a savage band,
With cruel inroad vex'd our peaceful land,

[42] Queen of the Amazons.

[43] Rheba, otherwise called Rhesus or Rhebus, a river of Bithynia, falling into the Euxine sea.

And wide encroachments; and the ravage spread,
Where Hypius steals, through many a grassy mead.
But, valiant chiefs, ye have aveng'd our wrongs
On that oppressor and his brutal throngs:
Thee, Pollux, to the fight some god impell'd,
And aid divine the dire opponent quell'd.
For these inestimable acts receive
The best return, a grateful heart can give;
Such as the feeble to the mighty owe,
Where thanks and praise are all they can bestow.
Yet more, my son, my Dascylus I send,
To guide your progress and your wish attend.
While he is present, in these seas ye find
Each prompt assistance of the friendly mind,
From all whose shores our Euxine billows lave,
Ev'n where Thermodon mingles with the wave.
A tribute to this band in common paid,
Since all in common lent their timely aid;
But from our hands these godlike brothers claim
Peculiar gratitude, peculiar fame.
Where Acherusian cliffs insult the skies,
To speak my gratitude a fane shall rise;
As future mariners their course pursue,
With hallow'd awe that structure shall they view.
I to the youths, as guardian pow'r's divine,
The fertile space without our walls assign.'
Thus through the night their converse they prolong'd,
With dawn returning to the ship they throng'd.
Lycus was there, with gifts uncounted fraught,
And from the regal dome his offspring brought.
Now hurries on the mournful doom that waits
The son of Abas, skill'd to read the fates;

Could wretched man avoid those ills he sees,
Or prescience overrule what Heav'n decrees!
His hour was come; for, where the river spreads,
In stagnant marshes, o'er the grassy meads,
The tusky boar, tremendous monster, bides,
And bathes his limbs, and cools his bristly sides.
Fear'd e'en by water nymphs, to man unknown,
Amid the' extended marsh he reign'd alone.
Where the green banks in swelling hillocks grow,
And chok'd with mud, the river scarce can flow,
Down the declivity as Idmon ran,
The' impetuous foe assail'd the' incautious man.
As hid among the lofty reeds he lay,
The time he watch'd, and rush'd upon the prey.
He tore the thigh, he snapp'd the nerve and bone;
The son of Abas, with a dreadful groan,
That pierc'd each heart, fell bleeding on the ground;
Loud shouts of anguish from his comrades sound.
As backward to his marsh the monster flew,
With erring haste the javelin Peleus threw,
Around the savage turn'd, to seek his foe;
From Idas' hand he feels the deadly blow;
He grinds his tusks, and writhes around the lance,
The Minyæ to their wounded friend advance.
They leave the monster weltering in his gore,
And bear the son of Abas [44] to the shore,
Convulsive sobbing in the pangs of death,
And soon within their arms he yields his breath.
Care of the voyage flies the general mind,
And every thought is to the dead confin'd.
Three days, continual days, the dead they mourn'd;
The fourth with solemn pomp the corse inurn'd;

44 Idmon.

And royal Lycus with his subject train,
Attend the funeral rites for Idmon slain;
Full many a victim to his memory bled,
And high they rear'd the mound, and widely spread.
And still that monument his memory keeps,
The sailor sees it as he ploughs the deeps;
An olive trunk upon the summit plac'd,
Ev'n now remains with verdant foliage grac'd.
Near to that Acherusian hill it lies;
And, if the bard may speak without disguise,
Taught by the muse, Apollo's voice divine,
Warn'd the Bæotian and Nisæan line,
When to that shore they came with solemn rite,
To win protection from the parted sprite,
Him, as their tutelary pow'r to call,
And round that olive draw the' intended wall.
Mistaken men [45], no tokens of regard
From them awaited that Æolian bard;
No solemn rites departed Idmon found,
The' erroneous honours Agamestor crown'd.
But why that groan? another hero lost,
With general sorrow fills the' assembled host.
Oh say, for whom the sad sepulchral toil?
Say, to whose memory swells the rising soil?
Still side by side the verdant mounds appear,
And tell that mighty men lie buried there.
The son of Agnias here [46], 'tis said, repos'd,
Here all his wand'rings thro' the deep were clos'd.
While the last rites the band to Idmon gave,
A transient sickness swept him to the grave.
His loss with anguish every bosom thrill'd,
When now the last sad office was fulfill'd;

[45] They did not understand the oracle. [46] Tiphys.

In mute despair, with downcast eyes, the train
Sat motionless beside the toiling main.
Absorb'd in grief, upon their loss they dwelt,
Nor care of food, nor pangs of thirst they felt:
His skill essential to their safety seem'd,
And lost with him their hopes of home they deem'd.
But Juno mark'd their suff'rings, and possess'd
With wondrous daring strong Ancæus' breast.
Where Imbrasus descends to meet the wave,
To Neptune him Astypaleä gave.
Supremely skill'd the lab'ring bark to guide,
To Peleus thus with eagerness he cried:
'Why, son of Æacus, desert our toil,
And sit desponding on a foreign soil?
Think me not chiefly excellent in war,
Me, whom from Samos Jason leads so far.
Not with such skill I grasp the lance and shield,
As ships I govern in the wat'ry field.
Why should our band the future voyage fear?
Full many a skilful mariner is here;
The helm let any of that number keep,
From danger free we navigate the deep.'
His words with transport fill'd the warrior's breast;
His bold companions soon the chief[47] address'd:
'Why, comrades, cherish unavailing grief?
Complaints and tears afford us no relief.
Though great our loss, yet this advent'rous band
May glory still in many a pilot's hand.
No more the time in lamentations waste,
Rouse to your tasks, and on the voyage haste.'
'Where, Peleus,' Jason cried, with doubtful mind,
'Where shall our band these boasted pilots find?

47 Peleus.

For blackest omens with despondence fill
Those, whom we late extoli'd for naval skill.
My heart presages some disastrous doom,
With those that sleep already in the tomb.
If Heav'n's decree withholds us from the plains,
And stately walls, where fierce Æetes reigns,
If this devoted train shall pass no more
The floating rocks, or view the Grecian shore;
In dark oblivion sunk, and lost to praise,
Here shall we pine an useless length of days.'
He ceas'd; Ancæus eagerly replied,
And offered through the deep their ship to guide.
Some pow'r divine impell'd. The' important task
Erginus, Nauplius, and Euphemus ask.
The crowd repell'd their claim. The general voice
Pronounc'd Ancæus object of their choice.
Now the twelfth morn display'd her radiance fair,
The' assembled Minyæ to their ship repair.
Full in their stern loud sang the western blast,
And Acheron with oars they swiftly pass'd.
The breeze they trust, the canvas wide display,
And cut with swelling sails their tranquil way.
Now, pass'd Callichorus, they swiftly drove,
Where fable sings, of old, the son of Jove,
Nysëian call'd from tribes of Indian strain,
Triumphant turning to the Theban plain.
Perform'd his orgies as he pass'd along,
And round the cavern led the choral throng,
(The cheerless cavern of unbroken night
Where slept the god) amid the hallow'd rite.
The natives hence impos'd that river's name;
Hence to the cave its appellation came[48].

[48] Callichorus.—From two Greek words.

And now the beach the stately barrow shows,
Where the remains of Sthenelus repose.
Alcides led his youthful steps from far,
With Amazons to wage advent'rous war;
Returning, here the' untimely doom he bore,
An arrow pierc'd him on the fatal shore.
Ere from that spot the Grecian vessel fled,
Persephone, fair empress of the dead,
(The warrior's mournful pray'r such pity mov'd)
Anxious to greet the native bands he lov'd,
Allow'd the shade from Stygian gloom to rise,
With those dear objects to rejoice his eyes.
High on the summit of his tomb he stood,
And view'd the vessel dancing o'er the flood;
Such as in life appear'd the' illustrious shade,
In beauty stern, in panoply array'd.
His graceful head a radiant helmet press'd,
The cone of purple wav'd a fourfold crest.
Short space conspicuous, hovering o'er his tomb,
He sunk—he vanish'd, in eternal gloom.
The band with fear that awful vision fill'd,
When Mopsus thus (to read the future skill'd):
'Repair to land; and let the' advent'rous train
A warrior's favour with libations gain.
Contracted round the mast the sails they drew,
And to the shore tenacious cables threw;
Then, busied on the land, the tomb around,
They pour'd libations, and the victims crown'd,
Such victims as the realms of night demand,
And burn their entrails with religious hand.
But, far apart from the funereal rite,
They place an altar to the god of light,
Whose cheering influence mariners desire,
And burn the victims on the hallow'd pyre.

His lyre upon that altar Orpheus plac'd;
The region hence the name of Lyra grac'd.
Now, calling them from land, the breeze prevails;
Embarking, from the yard they spread the sails.
The ship impetuous hurried through the deeps,
Swift as through liquid air the falcon sweeps,
When, to the breeze resign'd, from high she springs,
And darts unmoving on her levell'd wings.
Where to the shore Parthenius smooth descends,
Gentlest of streams, her course the vessel bends.
Oft will the virgin Artemis repair,
With steps delighted, to those waters fair.
Here bathes the huntress, when the chase she flies,
And hastes to join the banquet of the skies.
All day, untir'd, by Sesamus they steer,
Where Eruthinian hills their summits rear;
Then pass'd Crobialus [49], and Cromnas stood,
And dark Cytorus [50] crown'd with waving wood.
When morning now began to dart her ray,
Around Carambis they pursued their way;
Assiduous at their oars the hardy band
Impell'd the vessel past a length of strand;
All day, and the succeeding night, they toil,
And soon their labours reach the' Assyrian soil.
There Jove the daughter of Asopus plac'd,
With chastity inviolable grac'd,
Sinope [51], from the god she won, with art,
That gift unfriendly to the' enamour'd heart.
The fair deceiver cried, 'Almighty Jove,
My wish perform, and I return thy love.'

49 Crobialus—Cromnas. The former a city of Paphlagonia.

50 See Virgil—Undantem buxo Cytorum.

51 Sinope, a city of Pontus. The birth-place of Diogenes the cynic.

The god assented. At her lover's hands,
Virginity the crafty maid demands.
With equal art she mock'd Apollo's flame,
And unpolluted kept a virgin's name.
Her love in vain the river Halys tried;
Nor god nor mortal won her for a bride.
Here still abode three warriors, brave and young,
From fam'd Deimachus in Tricca sprung,
Deilcon, Phlogius, not unknown to fame,
With bold Autolycus, no vulgar name:
In exile here they were content to bide,
Since first they left the godlike hero's side;
With much-enduring Hercules, from far
They came, to share that Amazonian war.
When now the welcome ship appear'd in view,
With eager footsteps to the beach they flew;
They hail the Minyæ, as they gain the shore,
Their names, their leaders, and their course explore.
These known, they wish no longer to remain,
But haste on board to join the gallant train;
Louder and louder sounds the western blast,
The mouth of Halys in their course they pass'd;
And Iris, as their gliding course they hold,
Is pass'd, a neighbour stream to Halys roll'd.
They pass Assyria with alluvions fed,
Encroaching still on ocean's oozy bed.
Now, with a circuit wide, they compass'd round
The cliffs of Amazons, where ports abound;
Alcides here by stratagem detain'd
Fair Melanippe [52], till the prize he gain'd,
Daughter of Mars, and as a ransom bore
The varied girdle that her sister wore.

[52] Hippolyta was queen of the Amazons, and Melanippe her sister.

Hippolyta the precious trophy paid,
And from the chief receiv'd the captive maid.
A harbour there Thermodon's outlet forms,
A welcome refuge from the raging storms;
No river can with this resemblance boast,
Roll'd through such numerous channels to the coast.
Let four be added from its fruitful head,
An hundred streams affiliated spread;
From mountains high the parent spring distils,
That take the name of Amazonian hills.
One channel first the downward current binds,
Ere yet resistance in his course he finds;
But uplands soon, to thwart his progress swell,
And hills oppos'd the backward flood repel;
Then as the sloping ground affords a way,
Now here, now there, the winding currents stray;
Some near, some distant, in meanders creep,
Some perish nameless ere they gain the deep;
A few their parent to the main attend,
The winding shore where Euxine billows rend.
There, tho' the bands from storms a shelter found,
They bode reluctant near that hostile ground.
With warlike Amazons, their longer stay
Brings fierce contention, and no bloodless fray.
Those plains they held, a race inur'd to strife,
The foes of civil rights and social life;
For cruel injuries their cares engage,
And wrongs they perpetrate, and wars they wage.
Them to the warrior god Harmonia bore,
And from their sire descends the thirst of gore;
The' Acmonian shades beheld the fierce embrace,
That fill'd the region with a martial race.
Again the Zephyrs blew, by Jove's command,
And bade them leave that inauspicious land;

Else Themiscyra [53] soon, with rude alarms,
Had seen the' assembled Amazons in arms;
For, not combin'd within one wall they bide,
A threefold tribe, the region they divide.
Hippolyta beneath her warlike reign
Held Themiscyra with the subject plain;
From seats remote Lycastian troops advance,
And bold Chadesians, train'd to wield the lance.
Another day, another night had roll'd,
The land of Chalybes they now behold.
To them nor vine nor orchard plant is dear,
The glebe they turn not with the patient steer;
Nor bleating flocks in dewy meadows feed,
Severer toils employ that hardy breed;
Their sinewy arms earth's inmost entrails feel,
From stubborn clods they force the temper'd steel;
Their food they win from unproductive soil,
And never morn allows repose from toil;
While black and grim with smoke, with ashes blear,
Through ceaseless labour painful life they bear.
Then sailing round the cape that tow'rs above,
Grac'd with the name of Genetœan Jove;
Advancing in their course, the' advent'rous band
Were borne along the Tibarenian land.
Among that race strange usages they find,
Inverting all the customs of mankind:
When to the light their infant offspring rise,
The husbands utter groans and piercing cries;
With many a bandage bind the drooping head,
And helpless sink upon the sickly bed:
The wives for them the choicest food prepare,
And baths adapted for the teeming fair.

[53] A city and district belonging to the Amazons.

A region then they pass'd, and sacred hill,
Where tow'rs of wood the Mossynæci fill:
In stages high they rear the wooden frame,
And from the' abodes the people take their name[54].
Far diff'rent institutes their conduct sway,
From all the rules that common men obey;
The public objects we are wont to treat
In the wide forum and the crowded street,
With strange and studied secrecy they veil,
And deep in privacies of home conceal.
What native instincts, and the voice of fame,
From public view discard as acts of shame,
Uncheck'd and shameless as those herds that graze,
Such they perform in the meridian blaze.
Unknown to them the reverential awe,
That in a brother's eye can read the law;
Nor lasting harmonies, of kindred mind,
Nor contracts firm in wedded union bind;
The public way, the meadow, and the grove,
Are all the scenes of base promiscuous love.
Within the highest tow'r the king resides,
And equal justice for the crowd provides.
Woe to the sovereign! should his erring sense
Pervert the right, or partial law dispense;
His vengeful subjects close him in his tow'r,
Till pining famine brings the mortal hour.

This region pass'd, all day they plied their oars,
While near them lay Aretias' sea-girt shores;
(The breeze had languish'd the preceding night)
On high the bird of Mars pursued his flight.
An inmate of that isle through air he springs,
And o'er the rapid vessel shakes his wings:

54 Mossyni and Æcus. Two Greek words of corresponding sense.

Then shot a feather, pointed as a dart;
Oileus' shoulder felt the sudden smart:
His oar fell idle from his powerless hand;
Amaze and terror fill'd the gazing band,
At such a weapon rushing from on high,
At such a foe suspended in the sky.
Then Eribotes, from his station near,
Arose, with pity fill'd and mingled fear.
His friend's relief employs his tender skill,
His gentle hands extract the feather'd ill;
Then from the sheath his baldric he unbound,
A ligature to close the gaping wound.
But now, pursuing his companion's flight,
A second bird attracts their wond'ring sight.
'Gainst him, with steady aim, the bow was bent,
The son of Eurytus [55] an arrow sent;
Nor sent in vain. The flying death he feels;
And round, in many a dizzy circle, wheels.
Then near them falls. The son of Aleus [56] broke
The general silence, and the crowd bespoke:
'The' expected isle, Aretias, lies full near;
These birds undoubted harbingers appear.
How shall our band this hateful tribe assail?
Our stock of arrows in the' assault must fail.
Let prudence, then, combine her aiding hand;
If there, as Phineus bids, we mean to land.
When great Alcides, on Arcadia's soil,
Pursued the progress of his glorious toil,
From fair Stymphalus' [57] wide expanse, to chase
The brooding Ploïdes [58], pernicious race,

55 Clytius. 56 Amphidamas.

57 A city of Arcadia, contiguous to a lake which bore the same name.

58 Birds of the lake Stymphalus.

Most foul and hateful of the plumy kind,
I saw the chief. His quiver he resign'd;
His station on a lofty rock he took,
His mighty hands the brazen cymbals shook.
Far fled the brood abhorr'd, on sounding wings,
And darken'd air with screams of terror rings,
I speak with past experience for my guide,
Some apt expedient let us now provide;
While crested helmets every head defend,
To row, by turns, let half our number bend;
Half from the deck the burnish'd shield display,
And shake the lance to scare the foes away.
All, at one instant, raise terrific cries,
The' unwonted clamours shall the brood surprise;
The voice, the nodding crest, the brandish'd spear,
Shall daunt the swarms with salutary fear;
And when that isle receives our gallant crew,
Then clash your shields, your clamours then renew.'
He ceas'd; the counsel just applauses found,
And all their heads with brazen helmets crown'd.
Terrific splendour; and with purple glow'd
The crests, that nodded as by turns they row'd.
Some on the deck the spear and shield extend,
A warlike roof, the vessel to defend;
As when the roof of tiles some builder forms,
At once an ornament and shade from storms;
Adapted each to each, in order'd rows, [close.
The shields to shields, and spears to spears they
And such the din, as when with hostile rage
Conflicting myriads furious battle wage;
The clamours fill'd the air, while distant far,
No bird as yet perceiv'd that show of war;
But when approaching that infested ground,
Their shields they clash'd with a terrific sound;

In clouds on clouds the hateful birds arise,
And scatter far and wide with piercing cries.
As o'er some city when Saturnian Jove
Drives hail in storms, loud pattering from above;
O'er the broad roofs, along the spacious walls,
The shiver'd cloud in deaf'ning volley falls;
The populace survey the' ethereal arch,
And in the blackness see the tempest march;
Each door and avenue with caution bar,
And shun appall'd that elemental war;
Thus clouds of feathers on their bucklers fell;
Their bucklers thus the sounding storm repel.
But why should Phineus send the godlike band
To such a welcome, and a desert land?
What gain allures? what pleasures may redound?
The sons of Phryxus on that isle they found.
From Æa, where the rule Æetes bore,
A ship of Colchos seeks their native shore.
A dying father's last commands to keep,
They launch the vessel, and they plough the deep:
To gain the treasures, which, a countless hoard,
His mansion held, for his descendants stor'd.
That day their pinnace near Aretias [59] pass'd,
As Jove from high impell'd the northern blast;
When moist Arcturus, rising, in his train,
Brings the chill tempest, and the drifted rain.
By day, the breeze along the forest strays,
And shakes the boughs, and with the foliage plays:
By night, ascending with collected force,
He swells the billows in his howling course;
A settled gloom the face of Heav'n invades,
And not a star can pierce the brooding shades.

[59] This island had its name from a nymph, an attendant on Mars, who inhabited it,

Drench'd with the beating rain, and dashing waves,
And toss'd at random, as the whirlwind raves,
The sons of Phryxus see the billows rise,
And near perdition glares before their eyes.
The mast gives way; the sail, to fragments torn,
Flies scatter'd, on the shrieking tempest borne.
The' infuriate wave with sway resistless darts,
And strikes the bark—the bark asunder parts.
Then, sudden, by divine suggestion taught,
A mighty beam the sons of Phryxus caught,
As brac'd with spikes the wreck lay floating round.
Here clung the brothers; and their safety found.
The winds and billows, from impending death,
Waft to that isle their poor remains of breath.
Now burst the clouds in deluges of rain,
Both on that isle and the surrounding main.
O'er isle and continent the torrents fly,
Regions, that opposite Aretias lie;
O'er isle and continent, whatever place
The Mossynæci hold, injurious race.
Now the strong impulse of the billows bore
That timber, with the brothers to the shore.
They landed in the deepest gloom of night,
The rainy torrents fled the dawning light.
To meet the strangers, as the Minyæ ran,
In plaintive accents Argus [60] thus began:
'By Jove all-seeing, hear the suppliant's pray'r,
Whatever race of mortal men ye are;
The howling tempests that the billows sweep
Have dash'd our bark in fragments o'er the deep.
Where sunk in sorrows, and with want oppress'd,
We late embark'd. Oh! let the generous breast

[60] This Argus was one of the four brothers, and must be distinguished from him who sailed with the Minyæ.

With pity hear the suff'ring brothers cry;
And humblest raiment to their want supply;
Equal in birth and woes, an hapless train,
We reap our sad inheritance of pain.
In us, your brethren, your companions know;
Since born of women, all are born to woe.
To hospitable Jove are suppliants dear,
His chosen care—in us, the God revere.
Mercy to man regard to Heav'n may prove,
And pitying tears are offerings worthy Jove.
For Jove maintains the hospitable tie,
And o'er the stranger casts a guardian eye.'
Him Jason questions, with a prudent aim,
For Phineus' sayings his attention claim,
And near completion seem.—'Whate'er the mind
Benevolent performs, expect to find.
What country, say, was erst your dwelling place?
Say, what distresses o'er the billows chase?
What names ye bear, with verity disclose,
And whence the lineage of your father's flows.'
Perplex'd with misery, Argus thus replied:
'From land to land the fame has travell'd wide,
How Phryxus, sprung from Æolus of yore,
Exchang'd his native land for Æa's shore,
To you well known.—The ram, with golden fleece,
Convey'd the' illustrious fugitive from Greece.
Still to be seen the trophied fleece remains;
A branching oak the precious freight sustains.
When, pass'd the perils of the deep, he gain'd
The distant regions, where Æëtes reign'd;
The ram, that bore him safely o'er the tide,
At once the prophet and the victim died,
Victim to Jove, the guardian of his flight.
Æetes then, with hospitable rite,

Within his stately walls receiv'd the guest,
Close to himself by bonds of marriage press'd,
Chalciope his daughter fair bestow'd,
And gave the maid unask'd and unendow'd [61],
(Nor pow'r nor wealth the naked stranger brought)
The bond of love, the pledge of friendly thought.
Their children we—our sire, by years oppress'd,
Within Æetes' palace sunk to rest.
We sail'd, obedient to his last desire,
To seek the wealth of Athamas, his sire,
Stor'd in Orchomenus. But, would ye hear
The names that I and these my brethren bear,
Your aid with Argus, Cytisorus claims,
Melas and Phrontis. All ill-fated names.'
He ceas'd: this meeting charm'd the gen'ral breast,
All with affection round the strangers press'd;
And gaz'd upon them, with admiring eyes,
In language apt while Jason thus replies:
'Much pitied youths, ye find amid this band,
Nor soul averse, nor unperforming hand.
In double right our aid must be supplied,
Brothers in sufferings and in blood allied.
Third in descent from Athamas ye spring,
And I my parentage from Cretheus bring.
At equal distance, from a common sire,
Through them we catch the sparks of vital fire.
I seek the region where Æetes sways,
With these, my friends—but this for future days.
Now, take such raiment as your plight demands,
And thank the Gods that sent you to our hands.'
He ceased, and garments from the vessel gave,
To clothe their members shivering from the wave.

[61] Unendowed. For, by the custom of those times, the dowry was not given by the wife, but paid by the husband.

With hasty step the shrine of Mars they sought,
And consecrated flocks for off'ring brought;
Around his altar crowd an eager train;
Of stones unhewn, it stood without the fane;
Within, by barbarous worship long rever'd,
A shapeless symbol of the God appear'd.
Deep fix'd a black and massy column stands,
Address'd with vows by Amazonian bands.
Nor sheep, nor oxen, to the fane they drive,
Nor common entrails to the flames they give;
But stall-fed horses, that ferocious race
In morsels cut, and on their altars place.
The rites perform'd, the banquet held its place,
And all the train the calls of hunger chase.
When Jason thus: 'The' all-seeing eyes of Jove,
The deeds of mortals ponder from above;
The good and just are his peculiar care,
And never should the virtuous man despair;
He snatch'd your father from a stepdame's wrath,
And strew'd with boundless wealth his favour'd path.
And you, his progeny belov'd, he keeps
Unharm'd by tempests, and the raging deeps.
On your desires behold our vessel wait;
Embark with freedom, and pursue your fate,
To Colchos steer, or mansions of your line
In Pthian seats, Orchomenus divine.
Our ship is hallow'd: for Minerva's hand
The timber hew'd, and fashion'd for our band.
The sacred oaks from Pelion's summit came;
And, taught by Pallas, Argus join'd the frame.
Your vessel yielded to the waves and wind,
But greater dangers yet remain behind;
The narrow strait, where floating rocks are found,
That clash incessant with tremendous sound.

Alike with you we seek the Grecian plain;
But aid us first the golden fleece to gain;
And guide our course. Oblations shall be paid,
With solemn rites to soothe your father's shade.
The vengeance then of angry Jove may cease,
And leave the sons of Æolus in peace.'
He paus'd; and terror seiz'd the hearer's mind,
Who knew Æëtes form'd of sternest kind.
To bear away from him the fleece of gold,
Appear'd a task that might appal the bold;
Solicitous to shun that rash emprize,
In terms dissuasive Argus thus replies:
'O friends, whene'er the' emergence shall require,
Our feeble aid shall second your desire.
But Colchos! how the thought with terror chills!
Such savage cruelty Æëtes fills!
He boasts his lineage from the god of day,
And countless are the tribes that own his sway.
In dreadful voice, in strength and warlike pride,
He dares to vie with Mars the homicide.
The guardian monster let your eyes behold,
And then aspire to win the fleece of gold!
A serpent vast, exempt from death and sleep,
Produc'd by earth on the Caucasian steep.
Where black the Typhaonian[62] rocks arise,
And thunderstruck enormous Typhon lies.
His impious hands were rais'd with madding ire,
And on his head descends the' eternal fire.
Warm, smoking from the wound the gore distils,
To Nyssa's plains he fled, and rising hills;

[62] Typhon struck and wounded by the thunder of Jupiter, came in that plight to Syria, thence to the regions about Pelusium, in Egypt, still pursued by Jove.

There chain'd in iron sleep, no more to wake,
He rolls; and o'er him spreads the vast Serbonian lake.'
He ceas'd; and paleness on each visage dwelt,
For all the terrors of that conflict felt,
But Peleus thus his hardy speech address'd:
'O friend, expel despondence from thy breast;
Nor strength we want, nor skill in war's alarms,
With fierce Æëtes to contend in arms.
What, though from gods he draws his vaunted line,
We too can boast an origin divine.
Let him the fleece concede; or haply, vain
His heavenly lineage, and his subject train.'
Thus speech alternate wing'd away the hour;
The banquet done, they yield to slumber's pow'r.
The morn with rising gales dispers'd their sleep,
And gentle murmurs call'd them to the deep.
They rais'd their sails, the canvas caught the wind,
And soon they left that isle of Mars behind.
The night succeeding, with propitious blast
Along the shores of Philyra [63] they pass'd.
There, Chronus, eldest progeny of Heav'n,
To thine embrace, fair Philyra, was giv'n;
When from Olympus thou the Titans sway'd,
And Jove was in the Cretan cavern laid!
There, the Curetes, fill'd with pious fears,
Nurs'd the young sov'reign of the starry spheres.
Though studious to withdraw from Rhea's eye,
What arts the glance of jealousy may fly?
The' offended wife surpris'd their guilty loves,
Chang'd to a horse the conscious husband roves.

[63] An island so called from Philyra, the daughter of Oceanus, who had an amour with Saturn.

Through shame, the nymph, fair daughter of the main,
Forsook the favourite seat, the native plain;
The lofty mountains of Pelasgia sought,
And there to birth a monstrous offspring brought.
In origin, part bestial, part divine,
He bore resemblance of the mingled line.
The region of Macrones they survey,
And plains immense, where the Bechiri sway.
These, in their voyage, pass'd, the shores they trace,
Where the Sapirians dwell, a lawless race.
Still onward borne by the propitious blast,
They plough'd the deep, and the Byzeres pass'd;
Its ample bay the Colchian shore reveals,
And Caucasus his head in Heav'n conceals.
There 'mid the rocky crags that rise around,
With brazen shackles was Prometheus bound;
His vitals are the famish'd eagle's food,
Still, still devour'd, and evermore renew'd;
Still the dire feast the bird of carnage brings,
To dip the beak in gore, and flap the wings.
That eve they saw him, by the twilight pale,
At first beneath the clouds he seem'd to sail.
They heard him scream terrific as he pass'd,
With levell'd pinions o'er the lofty mast.
Their canvas flutter'd as his plumage moves,
No bird he seems that field aërial roves;
But, like some vessel, borne by sail and oars,
Ample and dark, with steady flight he soars.
Oh! soon they hear most lamentable sounds,
With shrieks of torture all the air resounds.
Canst thou, O wretch, withdraw the' accustom'd feast?
What hope? what means to shun the direful guest?

Till from the cliffs returning, gorg'd with food,
Slowly he sails, distilling drops of blood.
While night prevail'd, by Argus[64] taught, they found
The mouths of Phasis, and the Colchian bound;
The sails and yards within their places stor'd,
And laid the' inclining mast along the board;
With oars the mighty current they ascend
That gurgles hoarse, and to the stroke they bend.
The rocks of Caucasus, that meet the sky,
And Scythian Æa[65], on the left hand lie:
The plains of Mars were on the right display'd,
And consecrated groves with horrid shade.
The guardian serpent there, that never slept,
The fleece, suspended 'mid the foliage, kept.
In Jason's hand the golden goblet flam'd,
With awful rev'rence many a pow'r he nam'd.
Libations pure were on the stream bestow'd,
And next for Earth the racy vintage flow'd;
Then to the deities that haunt the soil,
And shades of heroes freed from mortal toil;
'Hail, native pow'rs! propitious be the strand,
In safety guard us as ye guard the land.'
Ancæus then—'Behold the Colchian plains,
And Phasis[66] reach'd: what counsel now remains?

[64] Not the builder of the ship, but the son of Phryxus, who, by his local knowledge, could best pilot them.

[65] Æa, the capital of Colchis at the time of the Argonautic expedition, was on the Phasis, about fifteen miles from the Euxine sea.

[66] This river rises on Mount Caucasus, and flows from north to south, as appears from the map of Mingrelia or Colchis, in Thevenot's Collection, and Sir John Chardin's account of the country.

Think, with Æëtes, how we may prevail; 1830
How soothe with art, or with success assail.'
He ceas'd—as Argus bids, the' heroic race
In the 'mid stream their ship at anchor place.
The trees above wave gloomy o'er their heads;
Below, the stream its stagnant water spreads.
They court the gifts of slumber through the night,
And hail with gladness the returning light.

END OF VOL. I.

Whittingham and Rowland, Printers, Goswell Street, London.

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

With hands uprais'd, he hail'd the parting train,
"Safe may ye sail, and safe your homes regain."

Argonautics Book I. line 887.

Drawn by Richd. Cook

Engraved by J. Noble

THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

TRANSLATED;

WITH

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS,

CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND EXPLANATORY.

BY

W. PRESTON, ESQ. M.R.I.A.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

JUNO and Minerva, having consulted together how they may best aid the Argonauts in their enterprise, resolve to apply to Venus.—They persuade her to send Cupid to inspire Medea with love for Jason.—That hero, with the sons of Phryxus, presenting himself before Æetes, demands of him the golden fleece.—The monarch, enraged at this bold application, propounds tremendous, and, as he thought, impracticable tasks, as the means of obtaining the fleece.—These were, to yoke the bulls breathing fire.—To sow the dragon's teeth, and reap the harvest of armed men.—In the meantime, Venus finds Cupid playing at dice with Ganymede.—She bribes her son with a couple of golden balls, to co-operate in the design of inflaming Medea with love.—The passion and mental conflicts of that princess are described.—She resigns herself wholly to the dominion of love; and, under the influence of that emotion, determines to assist Jason in his enterprise.—She has an interview with the young hero at the temple of Hecate.—She furnishes him with a certain medicament, composed of en-

chanted herbs and drugs; by which he should be enabled to endure the fiery breath of the bulls.—And instructs him how he is to conduct himself, so as to avoid the fury of the earth-born brothers, who were to spring up from the dragon's teeth.—The fatal day arrives.—Jason, duly instructed and prepared, enters on his task with alacrity.—Description of his yoking the bulls, compelling them to work, and sowing the dragon's teeth.—The harvest of armed men springs up.—Jason, as he had been previously instructed, throws a stone among them.—They begin to fight, and destroy each other.—Jason exterminates the survivors.—Æetes beholds the scene with rage and despair.

COME, Erato[1], sweet parent of the song,
That tell'st the feelings of the' enamour'd throng.
Relate how Jason, from that Colchian shore,
The fleecy treasure to Thessalia bore:
While artful love to Pallas lent his aid,
And gentle phrensy fir'd the royal maid.
The tender wars of Venus are thy care,
Thy melting numbers soothe the virgin fair;
O soft historian of the lover's flame,
Hence are thy songs, and hence the' endearing name.
Yet undetermin'd on their future way,
The Grecian band conceal'd in sedges lay.
Meantime, the daughter and the wife of Jove
Consult, sequester'd from the pow'rs above;
When to their fragrant chamber they repair'd,
Not Jove himself their sacred counsels shar'd;
The converse first from royal Juno mov'd,
Anxious to learn what wisdom's pow'r approv'd.

[1] The muse who presided over love and poetry, so called from the Greek word, *erao*.

'Daughter of Jove, what purpose fills thy mind?
Say, what expedient can thy wisdom find?
What soothing speech from stern Æetes gains
The fleece of gold? what stratagem obtains?
Fierce as he is, much labour it will ask,
But shall immortals shun an arduous task?'
She ceas'd, and Pallas thus: 'Revolving thought
Already with the favourite theme is fraught.
From scheme to scheme I turn my doubtful mind,
Yet none propitious to the Greeks I find.'
She paus'd; and both upon the pavement keep
Their glances fix'd, in meditation deep.
Then Juno: 'Let us seek the queen of charms,
And gain her son to lend his powerful arms;
Let him inflame the fair Medea's heart;
Philtres she knows, and many a magic art.
His gentle weapons shall invade her rest,
And love for Jason fill the' enamour'd breast;
The slave of fond desire, she may unfold
Expedients, that shall win the fleece of gold.'
Minerva with the prudent speech accords,
And thus replies, in soft and gentle words:
'My sire produc'd me, of impassive kind,
Love's fond artillery never touch'd my mind.
Unskill'd I am, in amorous hopes and fears;
Yet if this engine of such force appears,
Let knowledge still o'er inexperience sway;
I freely follow where you point the way.'
They sought the palace of the Cyprian queen;
A spacious pile, where Vulcan's hand was seen.
The beauteous bride when sovereign Jove bestow'd,
His choicest skill the' impassion'd workman show'd.
The courts they pass'd, and found the portals clos'd,
Where the fond spouse his bridal bed dispos'd.

With fairest hands the goddess deck'd the bed;
To wonted labours while her husband sped.
His forge, his anvil, and the' erratic isle,
Invite him early to the scene of toil,
Where all the wonders of his art he made,
Recesses deep, that cavern'd fires pervade.
Full opposite the portal, on a throne
That circled round, the goddess sat alone.
Her tresses floated on her shoulders fair,
A comb of gold adjusts her radiant hair.
The queen of beauty then her cares bestow'd,
In braids prolix to weave her locks, that flow'd
Like streaming sunshine. When her guests she view'd,
The pleasing labour she no more pursued.
She bade them enter, and with courteous grace,
Sprang from her seat to give the strangers place.
Reclin'd, the heav'nly visitants beside,
Her careless tresses in a knot she tied.
Then with soft smiles, that search the throbbing heart,
And gentle stings, and secret wishes dart.
'Say, honour'd goddesses, what counsel springs?
After long absence what occasion brings,
Unwonted favour, to the queen of love,
The first and chief of deities above?'
'We feel the sarcasm, though conceal'd with art,'
'Juno replied,' but grief invades the heart.
In Phasis' stream the ship of Jason lies,
Allur'd by hopes to make that fleece his prize.
From Grecian shores he leads a gallant band;
Unequal conflicts the bold youths demand.
For all I fear, for Æson's offspring most;
O shall the flow'r of warlike hope be lost?

No, should the youth to Stygian glooms descend,
My care should follow, and my arm defend.
Ev'n should he try to loose from bands of steel
That wretch Ixion, he my aid should feel.
Shall haughty Pelias mark, with impious scorn,
My frustrate vengeance, and my shrine forlorn?
And shall not, then, the' atrocious tyrant dread
The fate impending o'er his guilty head?
Not from caprice my care of Jason flows.
His piety thy stream, Anaurus, knows.
Returning from the chase, when all around
The snows lay white, on every rising ground,
And roaring torrents, from the mountain roll'd,
O'erspread the plain, in shape deform'd and old,
With helpless seeming, and with piteous strain,
I prov'd his feeling heart, nor prov'd in vain.
He bow'd his shoulders to my weight, and bore
Safe through the deluge and the torrent's roar.
O deed humane! recorded in my mind,
No common recompense it claims to find.
But punishment and recompense demand
Alike concurrence from thy gentle hand.'
  She ceas'd. The novel language and request
Fill'd with amazement Cytherea's breast;
And veneration mix'd with secret shame,
While regal Juno us'd the suppliant's name.
  ' Goddess rever'd,' she said, in accents kind,
' Deprav'd and reprobate were Venus' mind,
Dare she presume thy wishes to despise,
For word or act that in her province lies.
Poor, poor auxiliaries are hands so weak;
But task them freely. No return I seek.'
  With prudent answer, Juno then proceeds—
' Nor strength nor force our present purpose needs.

A peaceful influence with thy son employ,
That mighty arbiter of pain and joy.
At thy persuasion let him wing the dart,
And love and Jason touch Medea's heart.
Thus may the Minyæ find a powerful aid;
For artful wiles endow the royal maid.
Thus may they safely reach Iolcus' shore,
And gain the fleece that shines with golden ore.'

Then Venus to the Goddesses replied:—
'Your influence sooner would that urchin guide;
For, shameless though he is, and unconfin'd,
Some touch of reverence might affect his mind.
Of me regardless, with reluctant scorn,
A mother's rule the wayward imp has borne.
In bitterness of grief, and passion's glow,
Oft have I thought to break his shafts and bow.
For, swoln with pride, at chastisement he spurns;
And menaces to reprimand returns.'

With smiles the Goddesses her plaint attend,
And meaning glances on each other bend.

In mournful notes resumed the queen of love:—
'I find my sorrows your derision move.
Why weary others with my plaintive tone?
No; let me weep in silence and alone.
Though secret anguish on my bosom prey,
Yet, where I can, your wishes I obey.
When softest blandishments assail his breast,
My son may grant a parent's fond request.'

Then Juno press'd her soft and polish'd hand,
And spake with soothing smiles and language bland.
'Perform the' appointed task with gentle art;
Nor let contention agitate thy heart.
Indulge thy son. A parent's wish will find
Short opposition from his playful mind.'

The Goddess ceas'd, and from her seat arose.
With her returning, virgin Pallas goes;
While o'er Olympus, and the realms above,
Fair Venus seeks the fleeting pow'r of love.
Sacred to Jove, where spread the flowery ground,
The little deity his mother found.
Nor found alone—the Phrygian boy[2] was there,
Whom Jove translated to the starry sphere,
Struck with his beauty. Them, as suited boys,
At golden dice the careless hour employs.
Minion of fortune, in exulting mood,
On tiptoe rais'd, the wanton tyrant stood.
His left hand grasp'd the winnings which he press'd,
His wealth securing to his ivory breast.
Delirious sweetness from his glances flow'd,
And o'er his cheeks translucent colour glow'd.
Near him with bending knee the' opponent stands,
Two dice alone remain within his hands.
His heart the conqueror's mirthful triumph stung;
His drooping head in silent grief he hung.
Now the two dice, that of his store remain'd,
That urchin god, by lucky chance, has gain'd.
With empty hands in deep despairing trance,
He turn'd, nor saw the queen of charms advance.
She stood before her son—she press'd his cheeks;
And thus, with sweet insinuation, speaks:
'Why, wayward urchin, that malicious smile?
What thoughtless victim does thy craft beguile?
Thy mother brings thee an appropriate task;
Nor yet, without reward, thine aid I ask.
Indulge thy mother; and I give my boy,
What once to Jove belong'd, a beauteous toy.

[2] Ganymede.

To him an infant in the' Idæan cave,
His nurse, Adrasté [3], the bright plaything gave,
A polish'd sphere. And never, from the flame,
Or skill of Vulcan, sweeter trinket came.
The various circles are of burnish'd gold;
Two swelling curvatures round each are roll'd.
The joinings are conceal'd, with skill profound,
And over each is pale green ivy bound.
Launch'd from thy hand, in fields of ether bright,
That star-like orb will draw the train of light.
The prize is thine, if thy successful art
With love for Jason fills Medea's heart.
Send forth thine arrows, let her feel thy sway;
Nor be the favour lessen'd by delay.'
The goddess paus'd; the boy, with ravish'd ears,
The task propos'd and promis'd payment hears.
The gather'd playthings from his grasp he flung,
Then to her robe with both his hands he clung.
Her knees he clasp'd, and sprang from side to side,
While every art of blandishment he tried.
I pine, I languish, for a toy so fair;
This instant grant it to my ardent pray'r.'
But Venus slily parries the demand,
With artful words, and with caresses bland.
She strok'd his cheeks, she kiss'd him, and she press'd,
And, gently smiling, thus her speech address'd:
'Thy dearest head be witness, and my own,
Here no deceit by Venus shall be shown.
The gift is thine; it shall not be delay'd;
But first thy shafts must touch the royal maid.'
She spake. The wily urchin, in a trice,
Collected from the ground his scatter'd dice.

3 Adraste or Adrastea, together with Ida, was the nurse of Jove in Crete.

He counted, one by one, the shining hoard;
And all in Venus' radiant bosom stor'd.
His quiver, leaning 'gainst a tree reclin'd,
He seiz'd, and in the golden belt confin'd.
He snatch'd his bow; he trac'd the realms above,
Ethereal, all-productive plains of Jove.
Then, through the portals of Olympus tends,
Where sloping the celestial path descends;
There the two poles of the celestial sphere,
To meet the heav'ns, their lofty summits rear;
The highest points of earth, where first upborne
The blushing sun unfolds the rays of morn.
The foodful earth appear'd within his ken,
And cities, fair abodes of polish'd men;
With verdant banks, where sacred rivers flow,
And cloud-capp'd mountains lift the' aërial brow,
In prospect wide the vast of ocean lies,
And seems to mingle with surrounding skies.
The ship was moor'd beside the rushy bank;
The crew the benches fill'd in many a rank;
Tall spiry reeds that in the marshes grew,
Their ambush'd numbers hid from hostile view.
Each, in his place, in silent order sate;
While Jason thus commenc'd the deep debate;
'Hear, gallant friends, what present thoughts suggest,
And then decide as suits the occasion best.
Our common dangers common counsels need;
From free discussion safety must proceed.
That man whose thoughts a guilty silence veils,
Of glory and of Greece defrauds our sails.
In arms your station at the ship retain,
While I the palace of Æetes gain.
The sons of Phryxus shall with me along,
And two beside selected from the throng.

I mean to try the pow'r of peaceful words;
If chance the king that fleece of gold accords,
'Tis well. If, trusting to his strength of hand,
He treat with insolence a stranger band;
We then the worst of our condition know,
And thoughts matured our future course may show,
Whether we shall depend on open force,
Or find in stratagem some safe resource.
Injurious 'twere to seize the prize in arms,
Ere soft persuasion has applied her charms.
With soothing words persuasion can prevail,
While brutal force and rageful menace fail.
When blameless Phryxus fled his stepdame's[4] ire,
And murderous rites of a misguided sire[5],
His mild demeanour rising pity bred,
And stern Æetes spar'd his gentle head.
The laws of hospitable Jove, confess'd
In every clime, pervade the rudest breast.'
The band assented with a loud acclaim;
Nor one the counsel could in secret blame.
The hero's steps the sons of Phryxus guide,
With Telamon Augeas guards his side.
He bears the staff of Hermes[6] in his hand,
And through the reeds and waters hastes to land.
They reach'd an eminence amid the plains;
From Circe fam'd the place a name retains.
Osiers, in ranks, and vines o'erspread the ground;
Where carcasses are hung with chains around.
For, still the Colchians with abhorrence view
Sepulchral rites, that other tribes pursue.
Nor to the flames the lifeless man they give,
Nor bid the womb of parent earth receive.

[4] Ino. [5] Athamas.
[6] The sign of peaceful intentions.

No monumental mounds their hands compose.
Crude hides of bulls the manly kind enclose;
While, to the elemental air consign'd,
From trees they welter to the parching wind,
Without their walls. But different rites await
Their females when they feel the stroke of fate.
The corse is yielded to the parent clay.
Such various customs o'er that nation sway.
Propitious to their journey, Juno shrouds[7]
The Colchian city in a veil of clouds;
That safely they might reach the monarch's seat;
Nor insult from the swarming rabble meet.
Soon as the heroes pass'd the spacious plain,
The city walls and royal dome to gain;
The goddess then dispell'd the mist in air;
Wondering they stood before the palace fair.
Its ample gates their admiration call,
And stately columns rank'd along the wall.
On brazen chapiters projecting plac'd,
The roof above a marble cornice grac'd.
The threshold then they pass, in mute amaze;
There her broad leaves the paly vine displays.
Beneath the shade four springs perennial flow'd,
Where Vulcan's hand had wond'rous skill bestow'd;
One milk dispens'd, and one the grape's red blood;
One fragrant oil, and one the crystal flood.
Hence, when the Pleiades forsake the skies,
With boiling heat the gushing waters rise;
When the fair stars returning radiance show,
With icy coldness from the rock they flow.

7 Imitated from the fourth book of the Odyssey, where Pallas draws a veil of thick air round Ulysses. See also Virgil, lib. i.

Such wonders in the Colchian palace shine,
Eternal monuments of art divine.
And wond'rous bulls from Vulcan's labour came,
With brazen hoof, and mouths disgorging flame:
For these a plough he form'd, of structure rare,
And temper'd adamant compos'd the share;
A grateful offering to the god[8], whose car
Receiv'd him faint from the Phlegræan war.
Amid the court the stately palace rose.
Compacted valves each spacious entrance close.
In ample range the sumptuous chambers stand.
A portico projects, on either hand.
Oblique a lofty building clos'd each wing.
Here, with his spouse, abode the Colchian king,
Within the turret, that in height excell'd.
The' inferior tow'r his son Abyrtus held.
Him, earliest object of the monarch's care,
Caucasean nymph, Asterodea, bare.
Ere yet the bands of nuptial faith were tied,
That mark'd Idya[9] for his virgin bride,
This youngest offspring of the hoary wave
To parent ocean matron Tethys gave.
The graceful youth shone so supremely bright,
The Colchians nam'd him, from the source of light,
Fair Phaeton. The chambers that remain'd
The' attendant virgins of the queen obtain'd.
Chalciopé—Medea there abode,
Offspring by marriage on the king bestow'd.
That morning, to salute her sister bent,
The fair Medea from her chamber went.
For Juno's care confin'd the nymph at home,
Unusual chance, within the splendid dome.

[8] Phœbus. [9] The queen of Æetes.

Priestess of Hecaté, within the shrine
Day after day she pass'd, in rites divine.
Soon as she view'd the strangers, in surprise,
Mingled with fear, she utter'd piercing cries;
Full soon the piercing cries her sister hears;
Full soon they reach the' attendant virgins' ears.
They cast their webs and distaffs to the ground,
And all, with hurried wonder, crowded round.
With them Chalciopé beheld her sons;
Through all her veins a thrilling pleasure runs.
With eager joy her arms aloft she holds,
Each grateful youth his parent then enfolds,
With fond caresses, to his gentle breast;
While plaintive sounds the matron's cares express'd.
'In vain, regardless of a mother's pain,
Ye left me here, to tempt the dangerous main,
Fate has repell'd you. What unstay'd desire?
What cruel mandate of a dying sire,
O wretched me! would leave me to deplore,
My darlings ravish'd to some distant shore?
O Phryxus, how thy last commands impart
Eternal anguish to my bursting heart!
Why seek Orchomenus? why plough the deep,
To reach the seats that fancied treasures keep?
What place is that? ah, whither would you go?
Can sons delight to see their mother's woe?'
Rous'd by her plaints, Idya, royal dame,
And last Æetes, from the palace came.
The startling ear a mingled clamour thrill'd;
And various noises had the' enclosure fill'd.
Some of the train surround the mighty steer;
Some cleave with sharpen'd brass the billets sere.
Some, for the bath capacious caldrons boil;
Each for his lord was busied in some toil.

Through the clear air unseen, relentless Love
Came, like the fly, that mads the youthful drove.
Through valley, and through flood, it drives them wild,
Scourge of the herd, the Breeze by rustics styl'd.
Behind a column at the porch he stands,
And bends the' unerring bow with cruel hands.
A shaft untried he from the quiver drew,
Parent of pangs that bosom never knew.
With footsteps light the threshold then he pass'd,
And round and round his wily glances cast.
By Jason screen'd, he now contracts his size,
And to the nerve the' indented shafts applies.
He draws the feather'd mischief to the head;
Home to Medea's heart the shaft is sped.
Delirious trances all her pow'rs subdue.
Back from the lofty dome that urchin flew,
A laugh malign his cruel mischief show'd.
Deep in the virgin's breast his arrow glow'd.
Like pent-up fires it rag'd; and from that flame,
At Jason darted, ardent flashes came.
While soft oblivion o'er the spirit flows;
With fainting throbs her bosom sunk, and rose.
Sensations new the melting spirit fill'd;
Through all her veins delightful anguish thrill'd.
As when the toiling matron's frugal hand
Has heap'd the fuel round the smother'd brand;
From works of wool her scanty means are drawn;
Her wakeful toil anticipates the dawn,
And stores the hearth with lurking seeds of light,
That industry may steal an hour from night.
With gradual waste the fire in secret preys;
The billet moulders as it feeds the blaze;
Thus love, pernicious love, consum'd the maid,
A fire unseen that on the bosom prey'd.

The various hue tumultuous passion speaks,
And pale and red alternate seize the cheeks.
Now had the' attendants spread the festive board,
And lenient baths the weary limbs restor'd. [breast,
When food and wine had cheer'd the' expanding
The king his grandsons mildly thus address'd:
'Say, gentle offspring of my daughter's love,
To Phryxus, honour'd all my guests above;
What to these walls returns you? choice? or force?
Say, did misfortune interrupt your course?
Might counsels built on pass'd experience sway,
Ne'er had your bark essay'd the weary way.
The space immense before your eyes I plac'd;
For every shore and distant gulf I trac'd.
Borne in the chariot, at my father's[10] side,
O'er many a clime I pass'd; in circuit wide;
What time from Colchos to Hesperia's shore,
The god of light my sister Circé bore.
Our wand'rings ended on the Tuscan strand;
There yet she dwells, far from the Colchian land.
But why should tales of other times detain?
The' occurrence of the present hour explain.
Why from the vessel ye are present here?
And who these men that in your train appear?'
Before his brothers[11] Argus quick replies,
While prudent fears for Jason's ship arise.
In language mild he cloth'd his prudent thought,
For riper years had more experience taught.
'Our ship asunder torn by wind and wave;
Sole hope of refuge from the wat'ry grave,

[10] Phœbus.

[11] Lest they might be too frank and unguarded, and compromise the safety of Jason and his companions.

One precious plank, with anxious grasp, we keep;
That isle of Mars receiv'd us from the deep,
Buoy'd o'er the billows, by celestial care,
When shades of midnight blacken'd our despair.
No more we found the birds of Mars; erewhile,
Brooding they harbour'd in the desert isle;
But, ere we came, they fled their favourite land,
Chas'd by the prowess of a stranger band.
That band for us, in pity, Jove detain'd;
They gave us garments, and with food sustain'd.
A tyrant's jealousy this youth expell'd,
Who all the race of Æolus excell'd.
With boundless wealth endow'd, and regal sway,
His haughty mandate none may disobey.
He bids him wander, destin'd to remove
A curse, impending from the wrath of Jove.
Hopeless alike, to disobey or speed,
And only sure the tyrant's hate to feed,
He comes, enjoin'd to purge away the stain,
Deriv'd from Phryxus on the' Æolian train.
His efforts failing, they are doom'd to know
Inflictions dire, intolerable woe.
Nor cease their pangs, ere his return to Greece,
Means of atonement, wafts the golden fleece.
Minerva's skill the stately ship supplied;
Not like those barks that Colchian pilots guide;
Not like the bark our evil genius gave,
Sport of the winds, and scorn of every wave;
But, firm and tall, compact with timbers vast,
To ride the billows, and to dare the blast.
Alike contriv'd, with swelling sails, to fly,
And bending oars, that nervous rowers ply;
She bears collected all the prime and boast
Of youthful heroes, from the Grecian coast.

Far have they wander'd to the Colchian plain,
Through many a city, many a stormy main.
If generous thoughts the precious fleece may yield,
No force they meditate, no listed field.
Supreme in all things shall thy pleasure sway,
And ample gifts for the possession pay.
Their timely aid may quell the warlike kind,
Sauromatæ, that bear a rebel mind.
Wouldst thou be told from whence his lineage flows?
The race heroic shall my tongue disclose.
This chief, whose cause convokes the brave and young,
Is son of Æson, and from Cretheus sprung,
The gallant Jason. If we credit fame,
A common lineage with the chief we claim.
Cretheus and Athamas the vital fire
Deriv'd from Æolus, a common sire;
Phryxus from Athamas. His parent bright,
Augeas honours in the source of light;
And Telamon, allied to pow'rs above,
Through glorious Æacus, descends from Jove.
The hero's followers all, of strain divine,
From deities deduce the' illustrious line.'
As Argus ended, indignation fill'd
The monarch's soul; and storms of passion thrill'd.
Reproach and fury all the band engage;
His grandsons chief attract the burst of rage.
For them he censur'd, as the guilty cause,
That hateful visit from the strangers draws.
Beneath his brows his eye-balls darted fire.
' Hence, from my sight, ye caitiff brood retire;
Back, with your fables and your wiles, to Greece;
Nor wait the fruits of Phryxus, and his fleece,
Bitter to you. Not for the fleece ye come;
My sceptre ye would seize; and regal dome.

My table ye have touch'd with genial rite;
Or direful thanks intrusion should requite;
Tear out your tongues, and lop your arms away,
And send you forth a pageant of dismay;
A timely check to wild attempts and lies;
A just reward of monstrous blasphemies[12].'
He spake infuriate; high disdain impell'd
The son of Æacus; his bosom swell'd
With indignation; and he had repaid
Reproaches with reproach; but Jason stay'd
The war of words; and mildly thus address'd
The haughty king: 'Æetes, calm thy breast;
Let not our armament thy fears engage,
Or fill thy bosom with tumultuous rage;
Not ours the motive painted by thy fear;
No hostile purpose to thy realm we bear.
What man would traverse such a tract of main,
To spoil, with hand unjust, a stranger's reign?
But, plac'd by Jove beneath a tyrant's sway,
His cruel mandate I, perforce, obey.
Indulge our wishes. Through the Grecian land,
Thy name and honour shall immortal stand.
Nor shall the favour meet a thankless race;
Our warlike service shall repay the grace,
Whether the proud Sauromatæ must bend;
Or other tribes the shock of arms attend.'
Thus Jason with persuasive language wrought,
While doubtful fluctuates the tyrant's thought.
Now bent with sudden onset to destroy;
And now their strength in trials to employ.

[12] Lies—blasphemies: because Argus said that Telamon was sprung from Jove, and other companions of Jason of divine origin.

With him revolving, the last thought prevails.
'Why, strangers,' he replied, 'these long details?
If ye, indeed, a line celestial boast,
And, as our equals, seek the Colchian coast,
Lo, to your wish I grant the fleece of gold;
From valiant men I nothing can withhold.
Bear it to him, the despot of your land,
Whoe'er he is, that rules the Grecian band.
But, prov'd in trial, I demand to see
The daring man, who vies in force with me.
Now to the test; and let experience show
What tasks of peril I can undergo.
Two bulls upon the plains of Mars I tame,
With brazen hoofs, and mouths exhaling flame.
Obedient to the yoke the beasts I guide,
And plough the sacred space from side to side.
Four acres are allotted to the toil;
But rude the surface, stubborn is the soil.
No common seed is in that furrow sow'd;
No grain that Ceres erst on man bestow'd.
Along the furrow dragon's teeth I fling,
And hostile warriors from the tillage spring,
With mortal fury menacing around,
But soon my spear extends them on the ground.
At dawn I yoke my steers, and labour meet;
When twilight comes, I from the toil retreat.
If thou art equal to the task; this day
Home to thy king; and bear the fleece away.
But think not thou on other terms to gain,
The brave concede not to the recreant train.'
Silent the hero sat in grief profound,
His downcast eyes he rivets to the ground.
Much he revolved the proffer in his mind,
If thought perplex'd might some expedient find.

How shall he meet the trial? how refuse?
'Tis equal danger, to reject, or choose.
How shall he promise such a test to bide?
At length, with artful words, he thus replied:
'Just are thy sayings, king. I feel their force;
Nor shun probation in this glorious course.
I claim the labour, should my death impend,
The last of ills that fates on mortals send.
Those fates subject me to a cruel lord;
His stern commands, no doubt, no choice afford.'
Thus he, while terror wrung the' astonish'd mind;
In language stern, the monarch thus rejoin'd:
'Now, get thee to thy comrades. Thou hast dar'd
A task of peril. Come, with mind prepar'd.
Wo to thee, if I mark the signs of fear!
If but reluctance in thy looks appear;
If thou shouldst tremble at the fiery breed;
Or fly when warriors rise from fatal seed;
Mine be the care, in thee to teach mankind,
How dreadful 'tis to gall the nobler kind.'
He ended frowning. Jason rose in haste,
And left the table. Forth Augeas pass'd,
With Telamon; and separate by some space
Argus attended, with more tardy pace.
He stay'd to warn his brothers, by a sign,
Their steps within the palace to confine.
Thus they departed. 'Mid the crowd alone,
In form and grace distinguish'd, Jason shone.
The' enraptur'd maiden held her veil askance,
And caught, beneath the shade, a sidelong glance.
She gaz'd, and gaz'd; while grief her soul subdued;
And thought in vain the lovely guest pursued;
As when we catch at objects, in a dream,
That still beyond, yet ever near us seem.

While, sorrowing, from the palace they retire,
Chalciopé, to shun her father's ire,
Her inmost chamber with her children sought;
Medea follow'd, with distracted thought.
The cares of love within her bosom rise,
And absent Jason stands before her eyes,
His looks, his gestures, grav'd within her breast:
'Such his deportment—thus he wore his vest—
Such words he utter'd—thus, and there he sate,—
Thus from the portal rush'd, unhappy fate!'
Possess'd, bewilder'd, her enamour'd mind
Finds not his parallel in human kind.
Still, still, in thought, his honey'd words she hears;
His tuneful accents vibrate on her ears.
Much for the youth her boding fears arise:
A ghastly corse he sinks before her eyes,
She sees him with the fiery bulls engage,
She sees him bleed beneath her father's rage.
She wept the victim, as already dead,
And piteous tears of soft compassion shed.
And mournful words to solitude she spoke;
While from her breast the smother'd anguish broke.
'What means the strange disorder of my heart?
Such tumult can a stranger's look impart?
In questionable shape, from distant climes,
Comes he a prince, or slave distain'd with crimes?
No matter. Let a chief, or miscreant fall,
Why should the' event for wild emotions call?
Me it concerns not. Yet, renown'd or base,
In safety let him fly this fatal place.
Daughter of Perseus, venerable pow'r[13],
O guard the youth in that tremendous hour.

[13] Hecate was daughter of Perseus, or Perses and Asteria.

Protect him, guide him, to his native land;
Let him not perish on this Colchian strand!
But if the fates have destin'd him to fail,
And perish by the bulls that flames exhale;
Let him perceive there is a feeling heart,
That in his sufferings claims an equal part.'
Thus anxious cares the virgin's bosom waste;
The chiefs, meantime, the crowd and city pass'd.
Back, through the plain, their journey they pursued,
And Argus thus to Jason speech renew'd:
'Will Æson's gallant son disdainful hear
My present counsel, as the child of fear?
Yet, in a state so doubtful and forlorn,
No trial, no resource deserves our scorn.
Hast thou not heard me of a virgin tell,
In philtres learn'd, and many a magic spell?
Daughter of Perseus, Hecate bestow'd
The magic science; and with pow'r endow'd.
Might we this maiden in your cause engage,
No terrors would await the monster's rage.
To this my mother could dispose the maid;
Her influence great, but doubtful is her aid.
Yet will I seek her, and entreaties prove,
Our common danger may awake her love.'
Thus he benevolent. The chief replied;
'If such thy sentence; be the' expedient tried.
Go, and with pray'rs thy parent's heart incline;
And be the pow'rs of soft persuasion thine.
Yet feeble comfort can that hope instil,
That waves suspended from a woman's will.'
Beside the marsh the social train they find;
Impatient transport fill'd the general mind.
While eager questions every tongue employ;
With words of sorrow Jason damps their joy.

'O friends, (he said) the king's indignant mind,
Relentless, stern, has dreadful tasks assign'd;
Such as nor I, nor all this gallant band,
May hope to finish with successful hand.
Two bulls upon the plain of Mars he feeds;
Brazen their hoof, flame from their mouth proceeds.
Four acres are the space for tilth allow'd;
With dragon's teeth the furrow must be sow'd.
This fatal seed the tyrant's hand supplies;
Thence warriors clad in panoply arise.
The ploughman, compass'd by that hostile crew,
Must perish, or his earth-born foe subdue.
To try the toil, I boldly gave assent;
Other expedient none could thought present.'
Their downcast eyes in consternation fall;
The task is deem'd impossible by all.
Then each his neighbour view'd with listless gaze,
And silent sate in anguish and amaze.
Peleus at length, with dauntless mien and breast,
Arose; and thus the' assembled chiefs address'd:
'In deeds, not words, our safety must reside;
The moments haste our conduct to decide.
If, Jason, thou to yoke the monsters dare,
Preserve thy faith, and for the task prepare;
But if thy spirit from the conflict flies,
Go not, nor single any with thine eyes.
The glorious danger none from Peleus gains,
Death is the worst that fate for man ordains.'
He ceas'd. The soul of Telamon was stung;
Impatient for that enterprise he sprung.
The valiant Idas for the trial glows.
The gallant twins of Tyndarus arose.

Arose the son of Æneus[14], young and fair,
His cheek scarce shaded yet with golden hair;
Yet, firm in daring, ripe in virtue's flame,
The' appalling task of mighty men to claim.
In silence from the trial shrunk the rest,
When Argus thus the' advent'rous chiefs address'd:
'O friends, the labour that your force demands
May be the last predestin'd to your hands.
Yet Heav'n, perhaps, may keep resources stor'd;
My parent's counsel may some aid afford.
Your generous ardour for a while restrain.
Some little space within your ship remain.
Better the task of glorious danger shun,
Than, blindly rash, on sure destruction run.
A maid within the royal palace bides,
Whom Hecatè through paths of science guides,
From every drug earth, air, and sea produce,
Charms to prepare; and know their pow'r and use.
Of wasteful flame she stays the rageful force;
She stays the torrent in its headlong course;
The sacred moon within her orbit chains;
The planets from their devious range detains.
Theme of discourse, on our returning way,
This virgin, haply, might my mother sway;
The toil were light. If ye to this assent,
Back to the palace be my footsteps bent,
My pray'rs and influence in your cause to prove,
With Heav'n to speed me, and parental love.'
The favouring gods display'd a sign from high.
Chas'd by a falcon through the liquid sky,
With downward flight, a dove to Jason press'd,
And sought for shelter in the hero's breast.

[14] Meleager.

Swift on the vane alights his cruel foe.
Prophetic Mopsus mark'd them from below;
And, conscious of the future, thus reveal'd
The sacred truths in mystic signs conceal'd.
'I read the favour of the pow'rs divine.
The gods benevolent have sent this sign.
With soothing words, and each persuasive art,
Essay to bend the royal virgin's heart;
Secure to speed, if Phineus truly told,
That means of safety Venus should unfold.
The bird of love, her harbinger, we see,
Preserv'd from danger, to our leader flee.
A joyful prescience fills the' expanded breast,
Of toils successful, and of glorious rest.
But first propitiate Beauty's queen with pray'r;
Then to perform what Argus bids prepare.'
He ceas'd—the heroes their assent express'd.
The words of Phineus dwelt in every breast.
Idas alone, of all the warriors, rose.
In accents loud the' indignant spirit flows.
'Did women then embark to lend their aid?
And must our vows at beauty's shrine be paid?
Must we, forgetful of the well-fought field,
Our childish thought to doves and falcons yield?
Perdition catch you! be your arms resign'd!
With words subdue the weak unwarlike kind.'
He ended, frowning, while, in murmurs low,
A numerous train disapprobation show.
He sate indignant; answer none return'd,
Till Jason's mind with deep resentment burn'd.
To meet the' injurious charge he rous'd his thought,
And utter'd accents by the' occasion taught.
'If such the pleasure of the general train,
No more let Argus at the ship remain.

Moor we the vessel boldly from the land;
Longer concealment would disgrace our band.
No more, in marshes hid, the combat shun;
Bold and determin'd on the danger run.'
He ceas'd. And Argus, at the word, recals
His steps, and hastens to the city walls.
They weigh'd their anchors at the chief's command,
And urg'd with oars their vessel to the land.
Without the palace gate, accustom'd seat
Of council, round their king the Colchians meet.
The savage king insuperable snares,
And mortal anguish, for the Greek prepares.
Soon as the bulls the' ill-fated man should slay,
That rashly dares the dangerous task essay,
With wood, collected from the mountain's gloom,
The ship and Greeks he purpos'd to consume.
A dire example of impressive fear,
To bid the future visitant forbear.
'Æolian Phryxus, when these shores he gain'd,
No free reception at my hand obtain'd,
Gentlest of guests, with piety adorn'd.
Yet, had my palace gates a stranger scorn'd,
With earnest pray'rs he vainly had implor'd
Place in my household, station at my board,
Had not the son of Maia, from above,
Reveal'd the pleasure of almighty Jove.
And shall these pirates, that invade my states,
Elude the vengeance that presumption waits?
Miscreants, that meditate by force and spoil
To seize the produce of another's toil!
With wild excursion through the seas they roam,
To vex the peasant, and his peaceful home.'
The sons of Phryxus, too, his wrathful mood,
Condemn'd to wash away their crime in blood.

'Returning thus, with an unhallow'd train,
Ye come (he cried) to shake my peaceful reign.
Ye come to spy the secrets of the land.
Ye come to wrest the sceptre from my hand.
Irreverent wretches! but your deeds accord
With revelations of my father's word,
The' all-seeing sun. He taught me to beware
The homebred treason, the domestic snare.
That voice prophetic such a fear impress'd,
I yielded frankly to your wild request;
Pleas'd that the mandates of your dying sire
Should with the safety of my house conspire.
To distant climes ye purpos'd then to go,
And rid my palace of the' intestine foe,
Sole cause of fear. For, from my daughters rise
No terrors. They no treason will devise.
My child, Asyrtus, will not bear a part
In any scheme to rend a father's heart.
Chalciope, my child, thy sons appear
Sole cause of danger; only source of fear.
Guard well the vessel. Vengeance on my train,
If single miscreant 'scape the destin'd pain!'
Argus return'd the while his mother sought,
And to his aim with various speeches wrought;
Intent Medea's powerful aid to prove;
No new expedient to parental love.
But decent sense of shame her tongue withheld,
And fear restrain'd while tenderness impell'd.
Scarce dares she to the virgin's ear confide
Requests, from common rule so strangely wide;
Matter so dangerous, should the maid comply;
So doubly dangerous, should the maid deny.
Well might she fear her father's savage mind!
Well might she fear some impious task behind!

While on her couch she sunk, in trance profound,
Medea's sorrows soft oblivion drown'd;
Yet, fearful visions hover'd round her head,
Illusive forms, of mournful fancy bred.
The stranger seem'd, that trial to sustain,
Mov'd by no wish the wondrous fleece to gain;
But love and she the daring aim supplied;
He sought Medea for his virgin bride.
Greece he had left, at beauty's powerful call,
And love allur'd him to her father's hall.
The fiery bulls she then appear'd to tame,
And yoke, uninjur'd by their breath of flame.
Her parents, then, their promises denied.
The labour finish'd, they withheld the bride.
Between her father and the strangers rose
A fierce debate. The warfare to compose,
The maid was call'd, as umpire of the strife;
And soon the daughter yielded to the wife.
Her kindred for that stranger thus resign'd,
What indignation fill'd each parent's mind!
Vast was their anguish, loud and shrill their cries—
Scar'd at the din, the virgin's slumber flies.
Pale from the couch she sprang, in wild amaze,
And round the chamber cast a vacant gaze.
She pants. Her bosom palpitates with dread.
Thought is absorpt, and recollection fled.
'What forms of terror, miserable maid,
(With feeble voice she cried) thy sleep invade?
Some dire misfortunes have these heroes brought.
With anxious doubts this stranger fills my thought.
Far let him fly, and wed some Grecian fair;
My parents and my virtue claim my care.
But why with cruelty my bosom steal?
A sister's anguish why refuse to feel?

Maternal terrors for her sons arise,
Wilt thou, relentless, mark her tears and cries?
Think, savage as thou art, 'tis thine to save,
Or doom her children to the' untimely grave.
Oh nature! no, thy sacred ties shall bind;
In grief thine energies support the mind.'
In wild disorder from the couch she flew,
Unfolded wide the chamber door she threw.
Unshod, and disarray'd, in eager haste,
To seek her sister, she the threshold pass'd.
By conscious shame and timid awe restrain'd,
Long time before the portal she remain'd.
Fearful of ent'ring, to and fro she pac'd;
Now forward rush'd, and now her steps retrac'd;
Her trembling steps, uncertain where they stray'd.
Her gait the conflict in her soul betray'd.
Impetuous love, with wild desire impell'd,
And bashful fear and modesty withheld.
Impassion'd now her sister's door she sought;
Her chamber now with deep despondence fraught.
Thrice she proceeds, and thrice her foot recals;
Then prone upon her couch distracted falls.
As the young bride laments her blooming spouse,
Lord of her bosom, object of her vows;
In love united, and the hallow'd bands,
Knit by fraternal and parental hands;
She flies the soothings of the' attendant train,
She hides the fond expressions of her pain.
With grief, at once, and virgin shame oppress'd,
Her tears fall lonely on the' enamour'd breast;
When fates relentless the dear youth remove;
Untried the joys, the tender thefts of love;
From every tongue, that might impart relief,
She dreads a censure on her amorous grief;

In avarice of anguish hoards her care,
And eyes the widow'd couch in mute despair;
Thus mourn'd Medea; thus the cause suppress'd,
That bath'd her eyes and heav'd her throbbing breast.
Amid this conflict of desire and shame,
A virgin from among her menials came.
Unseen she stood awhile, her tears to view;
Then to Chalciopé with tidings flew.
Chalciope amidst her children sate.
Her thoughts were center'd on their future fate.
Much she revolv'd what motives might persuade,
What arts impel her sister to their aid.
Not inattentive to the maiden's tale,
She finds strange tumults in her breast prevail.
A grief so sudden fills her with surprise.
To working fancy strange surmises rise.
While doubt and wonder in her bosom wrought,
Her hasty steps Medea's chamber sought.
Sunk on her couch the' afflicted maid she found,
Tearing her cheeks, in floods of sorrow drown'd.
'Why do thy tears, Medea, sister, flow?
What fatal cause has plung'd thy soul in woe?
Does angry Heav'n thy feverish veins inflame?
Do seeds of malady pervade thy frame?
Hast thou for me, and for my sons forlorn,
The deep reproaches of our father borne?
Oh would to Heav n, that I and mine might flee,
And never more the roof parental see!
For ever fly this city, and this shore,
And never hear the name of Colchos more!'
Medea heard, suffus'd with crimson dye,
Eager to speak; yet shame forbade reply.
Now on her tongue the floating accents stray;
Now lost within her bosom fade away.

Her beauteous lips in act to speak appear;
But thence no murmurs reach the' attentive ear.
Long time she paus'd, and then replied with art,
That mighty love can teach the simplest heart.
'Thy sons my fond solicitude employ;
Lest them my father with his guests destroy.
When brief repose upon my senses crept,
The mind was wakeful though the body slept;
Terrific visions rose, a ghastly train!
Ye powers of mercy make the portents vain!
Spare my lov'd sister such a cruel doom!
Preserve her offspring from the' untimely tomb!'
She spake, for trial of her thoughts; to prove
The' extent and feelings of maternal love.
If anxious tenderness, her sons to shield,
To strangers aid against a sire might yield.
While pangs intolerable seized her breast,
The sister thus a mother's cares confess'd:
'Such visions oft are present to my mind;
And oft I wish thy powerful aid to find.
But swear by Heav'n above, and earth below,
To keep my secret, and thine aid bestow.
My sister, I conjure thee, at this hour;
By thy lov'd self, and every blessed pow'r;
By joys and griefs maternal ties impart,
Ties that full soon may haply bind thy heart;
Let not my childrens' dire untimely end
Torture my sight, my bleeding bosom rend.
I will not leave you, offspring of my love.
For good or ill one destiny we prove,
And should we perish—An avenging shade
I rise, to vex thy rest, unfeeling maid.'
Tears coursing tears, in floods, each other chas'd.
Her sister's knees, impassion'd, she embrac'd.

Her glowing face within her bosom kept,
As lock'd within each others arms they wept.
As thus they join'd their grief with mournful cries,
Through all the dome the lamentation flies.
Medea first resum'd the plaintive strain:
'Ill-fated sister, what relief from pain?
With imprecations why my aid demand?
Why name the Stygian powers, tremendous band?
Oh! did the safety of thy sons depend
On me; no sorrows should thy bosom rend.
Inviolable oath, that Colchians fear,
By Heav'n above and earth below, I swear,
Earth, awful mother of the powers divine,
My wish, my aid, my choicest skill are thine.
Though things scarce possible thy tongue should ask,
Ne'er shall this hand be wanting to the task.'
She ceas'd, and thus Chalciopè replies:
'Might not thy skill some stratagem devise,
Some art; if, yielding to the stranger's pray'r,
To brave the fury of our sire we dare;
To bear him through the conflict safe and free;
And snatch from death my gentle sons and me?
Our being on the youth's success depends.
Within, my Argus thy resolve attends.
To me deputed he from Jason came.
Thine aid, through me, the Grecian heroes claim.'
Delight Medea's throbbing bosom flush'd.
The mantling crimson o'er the lily rush'd.
A trance of pleasure every sense confus'd.
Her swimming eyes a sudden night suffus'd.
'Chalciopè, thy safety and thy joy
Shall every thought and every toil employ.
Let me not view the dawn of morning fair;
Let me not breathe the gift of vital air;

If object or connection claim a part,
More dear, more inward, in Medea's heart,
Than thou and thine! the brothers of my love,
Thy sons by nature fond affection move;
And I thy love in double right demand,
Sister at once, and daughter of thy hand.
A playmate with thy children have I grown,
Thy cares parental from my childhood known;
Oft would thine arms, so has our mother told,
My weak and helpless infancy enfold.
Go then. Let silence veil my promis'd aid,
Till art my parent's jealous care evade;
Not light or idle are the words I speak,
At dawn the fane of Hecatè I seek;
With potent drugs prepar'd, and magic charms,
To save the' adventurous youth from fiery harms.'
With joy her sister heard, with joy convey'd
Hopes to her children, of the promis'd aid.
Medea now in solitude remain'd; [gain'd.
And shame and fear, once more, the' ascendant
'What—for a stranger, in such tasks engage!
Impious—for him defy a father's rage!'
Now Night o'er earth her ample veil display'd[15];
And sailors, from the deep, the stars survey'd,
Orion, and the greater Bear; that guide
The nightly path of vessels through the tide.
Sleep on the weary trav'lers' senses crept,
Ev'n in the tow'r the careful warder slept.
Subdued by rest, the mother ceas'd to mourn
Her darling infants clos'd within their urn.
The busy hum of crowded streets was still;
And still the watch-dog's larum loud and shrill.
The queen of darkness trod her awful round,
Her ears untroubled by a vagrant sound.

[15] See Virgil's Description of Night, Æneid iv.

Medea's couch refus'd the soft control,
For love and Jason agoniz'd her soul.
The bulls that breathe intolerable fire,
Forebodings mortal to her love inspire;
The plain of Mars in dismal prospect lies,
In fancy there the youthful hero dies.
Distracting thought! she feels the fluttering heart
With feverish throbbings in her bosom dart.
As when, from cauldron or capacious vase,
The trembling lymph reflects the solar face;
Uncertain glancing round some chamber walls,
Now here, now there, the darted radiance falls;
The dazzling species plays incessant round,
Strikes on the roof, or dances o'er the ground;
With pulse irregular, that knew no rest,
Medea's heart leap'd fluttering in her breast.
The streams of pity from her eyes distill'd.
Corroding pangs her inmost bosom fill'd,
Incessant anguish. The devouring flame
Glows in each nerve, and wastes the weary frame.
It rends the heartstrings—hurries in each vein;
Fills every sense, and fires the madding brain.
Within her mind confus'd ideas roll,
Discordant purposes distract the soul.
Now, she determines to supply the charms
Of pow'r, to save the youth from fiery harms;
Now, to withhold; and seek in death to prove
A long oblivion of disastrous love.
Again, she hopes that reason force may give,
To sacrifice the youth, yet dare to live.

Amid this conflict, mournful sounds express'd
The painful tumults of the' enamour'd breast.
'Ah wretch! what end, what respite canst thou find
While choice of evil presses on the mind?

My thoughts are error, doubt, confusion all;
Certain in love alone, a wretched thrall.
Oh had the shafts of virgin Dian fled,
And early join'd me to the silent dead!
Then had I slept in peace, nor seen this band,
For my perdition, reach the Colchian land.
Nor seen, Chalciopè, in evil day,
Thy sons for Greece the' adventurous sail display.
Some god, some fury urg'd these strangers' course,
To rend this heart with anguish and remorse.
But let him perish, if the fates ordain
That direful exit on the martial plain.
How might I 'scape a parent's watchful eye?
Or how my philtres and my charms apply?
What language might deceive the jealous ear?
Or what my purposes to Jason bear?
In privacy may succour be convey'd?
What arts, what stealth, the bold attempt shall aid?
In secret shall I own my fond alarms,
And boldly clasp the stranger in these arms?
Oh! were he lost—would that event bestow
A pause from love—a remedy for woe?
Would not the soul, enamour'd of her grief,
Pursue his image, and disclaim relief?
Farewell decorum! farewell every joy!
Let his existence all my thoughts employ.
Whatever destiny for me remains,
Fair youth, in safety fly where fate ordains.
May'st thou but know, that from Medea's pow'r
Protection follow'd in that fearful hour,
And I am satisfied. Pursue thy fate;
Leave thy deliverer to misfortune's hate.
His conflict over, death shall end my care;
Whether I perish pendulous in air,

Or rest from pain the' envenom'd potion give.
But shall not then the tale of shame survive?
Scorn and derision shall attend my fall,
And taunts resound within this peopled wall.
Each Colchian female shall her death deride,
Who, slave of passion, for a stranger died.
A wanton, heedless of her virgin fame,
Who stain'd her parents and her house with shame.
O foul offence, no language can defend!
Disgrace to womanhood, that ne'er shall end!
No; better here resign this hated breath,
And fly reproach, so multiplied, in death.
This very chamber, and this very time,
Present a refuge from the monstrous crime.'
She ceas'd—and rising for a coffer sought,
With potent drugs of various influence fraught;
Some genial; some, with operation dark,
Could sense perturb, and quench the vital spark.
Upon her knees the hoarded philtres rest;
While tears, a ceaseless torrent, bath'd her breast:
From grief and love unequall'd they descend,
While for those sufferings she prepares an end.
The friendly bane determin'd now to taste,
She touch'd the bands that held the coffer fast;
And thought the balm of all her cares to find,
When sudden terrors rush'd upon her mind.
She paus'd astonish'd. For, before her eyes
The forms of death, in all their terrors, rise.
And in succession, blandishing appears,
All that allures the wish, and life endears;
Each darling child of hope and fancy bright,
That bids the senses teem with young delight;
And every joy, that to the' expanded heart
The mutual wish and social hours impart.

Sudden a fairer face all nature show'd,
In streams more gay the solar radiance flow'd.
Again the coffer on her knees she plac'd,
While various objects in her soul she trac'd;
For Juno's influence in her bosom wrought,
And gave the final bias to her thought.
No more she doubts, by warring motives drawn,
With settled aim she wishes for the dawn;
That Jason she might meet, gaze on his charms,
And drugs impart to guard the youth from harms.
Oft she unbar'd her portals through the night;
And look'd, and look'd, to mark approaching light.
The morn, at length, unveil'd her welcome face,
And through the city wak'd the toiling race.
Thy sons, Chalciopè, as Argus bade,
To watch her purpose near Medea stay'd;
The youth himself ere yet the stars were fled,
His eager footsteps to the vessel sped.
Soon as the maid descry'd the morning fair,
She deck'd her golden locks with studious care,
That hung neglected; and the' enlivening red
O er cheeks, all pale with sorrow's ravage spread.
Ambrosial essences her skin bedew.
O'er her bright frame a splendid robe she threw,
Confin'd with clasps around her slender waist.
A veil upon her radiant head she plac'd;
Her head, that more than mortal beauty show'd.
The snowy veil in waves translucent flow'd,
With spreading flow'rs of broider'd silver crown'd.
Her locks diffus'd ambrosial odours round.
Now, circling through the dome, with steps of air,
She trod the floor, and vanish'd every care;

Unseen those evils that around her lay [16],
And greater evils of the future day.
She call'd her maidens—twelve, in youthful bloom,
Stood at the chamber doors that breath'd perfume.
Alike in age, alike in beauteous frame,
Strangers to love, and the maternal name.
Intent, great Hecatè, to seek thy fane,
Her mules she bade them harness to the wain.
The mules and car obedient they provide,
Meantime the nymph her mystic coffer tried.
A drug she took that bears Promethens' name,
Sov'reign protection 'gainst devouring flame.
Those who that drug employ, with midnight care,
Must soothe the pow'r, rever'd with torches' glare;
Persephone, sole offspring, sought in vain,
By weeping Ceres o'er the' Ennæan plain:
That unguent with mysterious rite applied,
No steely weapon shall the skin divide.
With force innoxious, the devouring flame
Shall spend its fury on the' enchanted frame.
No fear of peril shall the man subdue.
In fight, no faintness shall from toil ensue.
Prometheus drench'd Caucasian steeps with gore,
And teeming rocks the potent herbage bore;
When the fierce vulture, delving for his food,
The reeking entrails tore, and swam in blood.
A cubit high the stately flow'r it rears,
Which, like the crocus in its hue, appears;
The stem disparting wide, sublime it shoots,
Like newly sever'd flesh appear the roots;

[16] Either because she looks so well, or through joy, at thoughts of meeting Jason; greater evils, when she should be despised by Jason.

The juice effus'd descends in sable rills,
Like the dark sap that from the beech distils.
For magic uses, this her skilful hand
In shells had treasur'd, of the Caspian strand.
Seven times she plung'd in the perennial stream,
Seven times on Brimo call'd, tremendous name;
On Brimo, awful nurse of youthful might,
That, veil'd in clouds, pursues the dogs of night.
Whose pow'r tremendous central earth pervades,
Whose pow'r tremendous sways the Stygian shades;
Ere, rob'd in black, thro' brooding darkness deep,
That herb she cull'd along the rocky steep.
She tore the plant of Titan [17] from the ground,
And earth convuls'd shook from her base profound.
Then direful pangs Prometheus' bosom rent,
And screams of torture through the air he sent.
  This unguent o'er the fragrant zone was laid,
That bound the lovely bosom of the maid.
Medea, hasting from the door, ascends
The car; a virgin on each hand attends.
She caught the reins, and with the sounding thong,
Through the wide city lash'd the mules along.
Behind her, the remaining virgin train
Clung to the chariot, as it roll'd amain;
Succinct, as through the spacious streets they flee,
They bind their snowy garments by the knee.
  As where Parthenius' [18] limpid currents gleam,
Or newly bath'd Amnisus [19], in thy stream,
Her golden chariot virgin Dian fills,
And swift-pac'd hinds transport her o'er the hills;

[17] So called because it sprung from the blood of Prometheus, who was of the race of Titans.

[18] A river of Paphlagonia.

[19] A city and river of Crete.

Call'd by the scent of hecatombs from far,
A thousand nymphs attend her rapid car;
The Naiads, that in cool Amnisus lave,
With the brown Oreads from the mountain cave;
The pensive Dryads, that retirement love,
And haunt the mazes of the shady grove;
And, as they pass, the beasts of wood and lawn,
With murmurs bland, and gentle crouchings, fawn;
Such was the train, all-beauteous to behold,
The crowds receded as the chariot roll'd.

Now, through the stately portals, o'er the plain,
With urgent speed Medea reach'd the fane:
There from the car she sprang, with throbbing breast,
And eager thus the virgin train address'd:
'O friends! some error strange misleads my thought,
And near those strangers hath our footsteps brought.
Unwelcome visitors they seek this land,
And fill with terror all the Colchian band;
Hence all the female kind, possess'd with fear,
Their wonted confluence to the shrine forbear.
Yet, having ventur'd thus, since none advance,
Our sports to censure with intrusive glance,
For wreaths collect we every fairest flow'r,
While tuneful songs deceive the fleeting hour;
Then home return. Yet, might my counsel sway,
Most useful were the' excursion of this day.
My kinsman Argus—but, my friends, conceal
In trusty silence what I shall reveal.
Oh! should my father learn it—woe to all!
What direful vengeance on our heads might fall!
But Argus wearies me with urgent pray'rs;
And ev'n my sister in his counsel shares.
With mighty gifts they would my purpose bend,
By magic aid this stranger to defend;

Else he must perish. Pity mov'd my heart,
Join'd to the treasures which he can impart;
My word is pledg'd obedient to their will,
And Jason comes the treaty to fulfil.
In secret here the treasure he divides,
And takes the philtre that my skill provides;
The strongest spell that magic can prepare.
Let all retire; and all his bounty share[20].'
She ended; and her mandates all pursue,
Argus apart the son of Æson drew,
Warn'd by his brethren, that when dawn should break,
The fane of Hecatê the maid would seek:
Onward he led him o'er the spacious plain,
And Mopsus join'd them, of prophetic strain;
Who trac'd events, with prescient ear and sight,
In voice of birds, and in foreboding flight.
That hour might none amid the sons of Jove,
Amid the progeny of gods above,
In youthful beauty, and endowments rare,
With Jason, deck'd by Juno's hand, compare.
Around his face ethereal radiance play'd,
And every gesture manly grace display'd.
A glad amazement his companions felt,
Such beamy charms on every feature dwelt.
The son of Ampycus[21] with pleasure glows,
And fairest omens of the future rose.

[20] I think I have rendered this passage in the most natural sense, but my version has been objected to. The passage may be rendered differently by reading for *spell*, *harms*, and inserting these two lines:

> Far different from the promise of his thought,
> A direful purchase with perdition fraught.

[21] Mopsus.

Beside the path that to the temple tends,
A poplar, with funereal leaf, ascends :
A station meet, where clust'ring rooks abound,
Whose ceaseless cawing fills the air around.
One of the number claps her sable wings,
And thus the will of royal Juno sings :
'Poor shallow prophet, ignorant alone,
Of what to striplings and to girls is known!
Ah fool unheeding, amorous parleys need
Nor babbling witnesses, nor jealous heed.
Go—go thou novice, in affairs of love,
A vile incumbrance from thy friend remove.
What? will the soft and timid maid explain,
Her tender thoughts before a numerous train?
Oh no, their presence checks the fond desire,
The sweet unfoldings of the mutual fire.
Hence, hence, thou harbinger of ill remove,
Go, simple novice in affairs of love ;
On thee may never Cytherea smile,
Or young delights thy gloomy cares beguile.'
Thus she reproachful. Mopsus gently smil'd ;
Her mission own'd, and spake in accents mild :
'Alone, O Jason, to the fane repair,
There shalt thou find a virgin young and fair ;
Bland smiles and kind reception shall be thine,
For Venus will her heart to love incline.
From her assistance shall thy toils await ;
So Phineus has reveal'd the will of fate.
With Argus here I shall remain apart,
Expecting thy return with anxious heart.
Thou singly haste, and urge the royal maid,
In hours of danger to bestow her aid.'
His prudent words their approbation find,
While thoughts congenial fill Medea's mind ;

Ah wretched maid! nor song nor sport had pow'r,
To fix attention in the sportive hour.
Sport seem'd impertinent, and harsh the strain,
Through music's varied soul pursued in vain;
The varied melodies displease alike,
No chord composure to the soul can strike.
Scarce can her train allure the wand'ring eye,
To diff'rent objects thought and wishes fly.
Absent she sat, in meditation drown'd,
And gaz'd on all the distant pathways round;
Intent, with eager eyes, and head reclin'd,
At sound of trampling foot, or sighs of wind;
The flutt'ring heart seem'd wing'd to leave her breast,
And painful throbs the glowing breath suppress'd.
He comes—the subject of her fond alarms—
He comes in all the majesty of charms;
With footsteps light, exulting o'er the plain,
And bright as Sirius rising from the main;
All beauteous from the briny surge he springs,
But death and mourning to the fold he brings;
Such fatal splendour Jason's charms impart,
Joy to the sight, but sorrow to the heart:
Sad interview, from thee the maid shall know
A direful tissue, of reproach and woe.
Her hurried heart within her bosom flies,
A sudden darkness veils her swimming eyes;
Her burning cheek the deepest blush suffus'd,
Her trembling knees to bear her frame refus'd.
To fly, or to proceed, vain, vain her toil;
Her feet beneath are rooted to the soil.
Now quickly vanish'd all the' attendant train,
Silent the hero and the maid remain.
No limb they mov'd; but, in astonish'd mood,
With gaze delighted, near each other stood;

Nor sounds nor gestures animation show,
Like oaks or firs that on the mountains grow;
Whose peaceful heads [22] all motionless arise,
While not a breeze is stirring in the skies;
But, when the tempests agitate the steep,
They wave, they bellow, as the whirlwinds sweep.
Thus stood the youthful pair, ordain'd to prove
A mighty change, beneath the storms of love;
Ordain'd that flowing eloquence to find,
That passion dictates to the' enamour'd mind.

The wily youth perceiv'd the heav'n-born flame,
And gently thus he spar'd the virgin's shame:
Why, beauteous maiden, in this lonely place,
Why gaze astonish'd on a stranger's face?
Think me not, like the common youthful crowd,
In thoughts capricious, and in boasting loud.
Why shouldst thou fear me? in my native land,
In ease and affluence of the heedless band;
Not mine the mood to wake a virgin's fear,
Safe slept her secret in my faithful ear.
Oh blush no more! Whate'er thou wilt, request:
Repose thy feelings on a feeling breast.
My fairest speak. With mutual hearts we meet;
No rash presumption fear; no foul deceit.
In this most awful place where fraudful mind,
And thoughts unhallow'd no reception find,
Speak uncontroll'd. Nor let soft speech evade
The flattering promise, to thy sister made.
The drugs of soothing pow'r. This aid I claim,
By sacred Hecatè, most awful name;
By soft attraction of the gentle ties,
When pleading kindred to the soul applies;

[22] Imitated by Valerius Flaccus, lib. vii. lin. 403.

By Jove, the friend of strangers, who delights
In deed benevolent, and social rites.
A twofold title to thine aid I bear,
At once, a suppliant, and a stranger here.
By perils compass'd, for thine aid I bend,
Sole hope in those dire conflicts that impend.
We, in return, whate'er the fates allow,
Or strangers can in climes remote bestow,
Will pay; the tribute of our thanks and praise,
And gratitude her monuments shall raise.
Their labours ended, our heroic throngs
Shall celebrate thy praise in martial songs.
The Grecian fair thy merits shall rehearse,
In strain symphonious, or in measur'd verse;
Our wives and virgins, who with sorrow pale,
Their absent loves along the shores bewail.
Grateful to thee the' exulting train shall prove,
Peace to their hearts, protection to their love;
Thus Ariadne on the Cretan shore,
Daughter of Minos, aid to Theseus bore.
Pasiphaé fill'd her veins with heav'nly fire,
Deriv'd from Phebus, her immortal sire;
Though Minos purpos'd to destroy the train,
His daughter's pity made that purpose vain;
To share the safety that her counsels gave,
She join'd their wand'rings o'er the distant wave.
Dear to the gods above her garland bright[23],
Adorns the glitt'ring canopy of night;
Rank'd with the beauteous host of heav'nly signs,
Her crown the pledge of fame immortal shines;
So should my friends to thee their safety owe,
The' admiring gods their favour will bestow.

[23] The constellation called Ariadne's Crown.

We read the means in that expressive face,
The fair deportment, and the beaming grace;
There our fond hopes the bright assurance find,
Of soft persuasion, and the prudent mind.'
Thus drop'd the dews of flattery from his tongue,
With nectar'd smiles her eyes she downward flung.
Then, fill'd with soft confusion by his praise,
Her eyes she ventur'd on the youth to raise;
The virgin wish'd, but tried in vain[24] to speak,
Such throng'd ideas for expression seek;
A thousand thoughts at once her fancy strike,
Alike important all and apt alike.
Forth from her fragrant bosom then she drew
The potent charm, instinct with magic dew.
She plac'd it in the youth's delighted hand;
And, had he pleas'd her being to demand,
Her life, her soul, in that consenting hour,
Of amorous yielding, had confess'd his pow'r.
From Jason's form, his face, his sunny hair,
Such beams of beauty flash'd upon the fair;
The sweet contagion, through the kindling eyes,
Subdued the melting heart with fond surprise.
The fumes of passion drink the hurried blood,
As shrinks within her veins the vital flood;
Their downcast eyes now spoke the timid shame;
Alternate now they darted looks of flame;
Beneath their brows sweet smiling lustre play'd,
Then hesitating, slow, rejoin'd the maid.
'Attentive hear me, that thou may'st derive
The means of safety from those aids I give.
With deadly purpose rankling in his heart,
The dragon's teeth my father will impart;

[24] See Valerius Flaccus, lib. vii. line 423.

The fatal seed in peril thou must sow,
A crop most fertile in despair and woe.
Thou, by the march of constellations bright,
Observe the moment that divides the night.
Bathe in the current of the' unwearied flood,
Then, veil'd with sable stole in solemn mood,
A circling trench with hallow'd rev'rence trace,
And kill a female lamb within the space.
Then rear with unpolluted hands the pyre,
And give the victim to the flames entire.
Appease the goddess in that awful hour,
Daughter of Perseus, sole begotten pow'r.
On Hecatè libations due bestow,
Let honey'd streams from sacred goblets flow.
This ended, home return with backward pace,
Nor turn at startling noise thy heedless face;
Though hurried steps along the causeway sound,
Or mastiffs hoarsely bay, with note profound;
Shouldst thou, ill-fated, rashly turn thy head,
Vain are the rites and hopes of safety fled.
Seek not thy comrades with irreverent haste,
Ere all precautions are observ'd and pass'd.
Soon as the morning shall illume the sky,
Dissolve this drug, and o'er thy frame apply.
Unwearied strength and courage shall be thine,
And vigour, not of men, but pow'rs divine.
Remember too, with this same drug to smear
Thy shield, thy trenchant sword, and pointed spear.
No wounds shall pierce thee, through the potent charms,
From weapons wielded ev'n by giant arms.
The furious bulls that roll devouring flame,
Shall breathe innoxious on the' enchanted frame.

But, oh beware! The' enchantment will not stay;
Its force is bounded by a single day.
Yet, not for this the bold emprize decline,
Some other aid in dangers shall be thine;
When with the fiery team, and potent hand,
Through all the' extent is plough'd the rugged land;
When all the tract is sown with dragon's teeth,
An earth-born race shall spring to light beneath.
When thou shalt see the crowding warriors rise,
In secret cast a stone of ample size;
For this, as famish'd dogs for food engage,
The giant brothers will in combat rage.
Fell'd by each other as they press the ground,
Then join the fight, then deal thy blows around.
Thus, safe from Æä shalt thou bear the fleece,
Scope of thy voyage, to the shores of Greece:
But, let my image dwell within thy mind,
And sometimes seek these shores; but leave thy train behind.'

She paus'd and silent stood, with downcast eyes;
A flood of tears succeeding stormy sighs;
While she reflected he must far remove,
Death to her hopes, and torment to her love!
But now with bolder confidence endued,
She press'd his hand, and thus her speech renew'd,
With mournful tone: 'Thou, on the Grecian plain,
Remember me. Thy form I shall retain,
Alas! too firmly. But, ingenuous youth,
Disclose thy home and household gods with truth.
What course will bear thy vessel from our coasts?
Where proud Orchomenus her treasure boasts?
Or, mid the waves, will Æä's nearer isle
Allure thy wishes, and in prospect smile?

But who that virgin, theme of thy applause,
Whom ties of kindred to my father draws?
Thy words have painted her as fair and young,
Of noble lineage, from Pasiphaé sprung.'
  Engender'd by her tears, pernicious guest,
Love rush'd impetuous on the hero's breast.
Ardent he answer'd: 'Neither day nor night,
Shall thy bright form be absent from my sight.
If I may 'scape, indeed, on Colchian plains,
The dreadful conflict that thy sire ordains,
And safely reach the happy shores of Greece,
I bear thine image, with the precious fleece.
My fairest asks me where my country lies,
My heart, my tongue, are strangers to disguise;
'Tis pleasure to perform the soft request,
By lips so sweet, and eyes so bright express'd.
A land there is, that lofty hills surround,
Where numerous flocks and fertile plains abound,
Sprung from Japetus, of heav'nly fire,
There dwelt Prometheus, good Deucalion's sire.
He first by laws o'er willing subjects reign'd,
And towns for men, and fanes for gods ordain'd.
'Tis called Hæmonia[25] by the neighb'ring race,
There tow'rs Iolcus, my paternal place;
And various other stately cities smile,
Nor ev'n by name is known Æeä's isle.
From thence, 'tis said, the noble Minyas went,
Who drew from Æolus his proud descent,
And built Orchomenus, a town that stands
In peaceful neighbourhood with Theban bands.
But why amuse thee with this idle fame,
My natal spot, and Ariadne's name?

[25] Thessaly.

Daughter of Minos. Let her memory live
In that esteem benignant actions give.
Her sire and lover she to friendship led,
And concord firm, with healing influence, spread.
Oh might thy father hear the words of peace,
From those dear lips, and all his fury cease!'
Thus he, with flattering words and soothing art,
While sharpest anguish wrung the virgin's heart;
Desponding looks and mournful tones express'd
The gloomy thoughts that labour'd in her breast.
'In Greece, perhaps, the solemn pact may bind,
And laws of honour overawe the mind;
Alas, Æetes knows no law but force,
Unlike that Minos, theme of thy discourse.
And far inferior to that maiden mild,
In charms and influence, his unhappy child!
Oh think no more of hospitable rite;
But, when Iolcus' tow'rs rejoice thy sight,
Remember me. Be some few sighs consign'd
To the poor victim that remains behind.
For me, no pow'r shall tear thee from my soul,
Nor mother's voice nor father's stern control.
May fame the tidings of thy welfare bring,
Some bird propitious waft them on his wing.
To bear me, might the favouring breezes rise,
And o'er the seas transport, and through the skies!
While round thee all the sports and pleasures flow,
That affluence, ease, and kindred can bestow;
Before thee might I stand, a sudden guest,
And say, through me these raptures fill thy breast?
Oh might I soon be plac'd, and long remain,
A favour'd inmate with thy household train!'
Then piteous tears her lovely cheeks bedew'd;
His gentle accents thus the youth renew'd.

'Wish not, my fairest. Fruitless wish to find
The bird of embassy, the wafting wind.
But, wouldst thou yield to seek the Grecian shore,
Our maids shall honour thee, our youths adore;
Our matrons hail thy tutelary pow'r,
Our guardian goddess, in the' eventful hour;
Whose counsels wise and salutary charms
Return the dearest pledges to their arms.
To some, the tried companions of their youth,
To some, the husbands of their plighted truth;
To this, a brother thine assistance gives,
That from thine hand a darling child receives.
Oh might I claim thee, as my blooming spouse;
Sole darling object of my faithful vows;
In hallow'd league of soul with soul combin'd,
One wish, one love, one fortune, and one mind!
Form'd for each other, by the gods allied,
Death, only death, our union should divide.'
His words her soul with amorous softness fill;
Yet, starting, she recoils from purpos'd ill.
Vain were thy conflicts, most unhappy maid!
For Juno's will, with pow'r compulsive, sway'd;
Brief was thy force, a lover to deny,
To Grecian shores thou art ordain'd to fly.
To wreck her vengeance against Pelias plann'd,
The goddess claims thee, on Iolcus' strand.
Meantime, the' attendants of the royal fair
At distance watch'd her steps with jealous care;
They watch'd the progress of the wearing day,
And silent murmur'd at the long delay.
The sun so forward on his journey pass'd,
Home to her parents bids Medea haste:
Yet, all unmark'd the stealing moments flow,
Such pleasure Jason's looks and words bestow.

His form, his soothing speeches so delight,
Full gladly had she linger'd there till night;
More cautious he, with watchful thought and eye,
Late and reluctant urg'd the nymph to fly.
'The day advances. To thy mother's arms,
Awhile, my fairest, I resign thy charms;
Lest ev'ning shades our intercourse surprise,
Or stranger mark it with unfriendly eyes;
In happier moments of the' expansive heart,
Hereafter we may meet, no more to part.'
The lovers thus in fond expressions vied,
The feelings all their eloquence supplied;
And amorous doubt essay'd with jealous art,
To search the secret of the heart of heart.
The youth his vessel and companions sought,
Fire in his eye, and rapture in his thought.
Medea sought her train along the land,
And soon to meet her came the' assembled band;
But all unconscious, as the groupe drew near,
Her thoughts were rapt above the starry sphere:
With limbs spontaneous the bright car she gains,
And takes the polish'd whip and flowing reins;
She lash'd the mules, with eager course they flew,
And soon the stately city rose in view.
Chalciope her sister now address'd,
With all the mother lab'ring in her breast.
Her sons awake the mingled hope and fear,
Much she demands, and much expects to hear.
In vain. Her words nor thought nor organ find,
Grief and confusion fill Medea's mind.
She hears not, speaks not, such a trance possess'd
The troubled soul and every sense oppress'd.
Down on an humble seat, beside her bed,
She sunk, and lean'd oblique her languid head

Propp'd on her left hand, like a drooping flow'r,
While from her eyes distils the briny show'r.
A gloomy cloud o'ercasts her thoughtful brow,
And self-upbraidings on the spirit flow.
A calmer moment, and a deeper heed,
In all its horrors view the promis'd deed.
His two attendants youthful Jason finds
Awaiting his return, with anxious minds;
He join'd their steps, and hasten'd to explain
The' eventful tidings to the' assembled train;
The' assembled train, as near the ship he drew,
With glad surprise their gallant leader view.
Idas alone, from all the train apart,
In secret bitterness consum'd his heart;
Nor pleasure from the common gladness felt,
For pride and envy in his spirit dwelt.
Now night came on, and shades and silence brought,
And calm repose the youthful warriors sought.
But, when Aurora bade the day-spring flame,
Two from the number haste the seed to claim.
Bold Telamon of Mars the darling went,
And, who from Hermes drew his proud descent,
Æthalides. Nor was their journey vain;
For from the king the dragon's teeth they gain,
Insidious gift. He sternly bade them take
The fatal teeth of that Aonian snake,
Whom ancient Cadmus in Ogygia slew;
When fair Europa ravish'd from his view,
His sister, by their mournful sire's [26] command,
O'er many a deep he sought, and many a land.
Before his face the fabled heifer went,
Guide of his way, by prescient Phebus sent.

[26] Agenor.—See the notes on this passage at the end.

At Thebes, beneath his hand the serpent fell;
With poison arm'd he kept the' Aretian well.
Pallas, who stoop'd the monster's teeth to save,
The spoil to Cadmus and Æetes gave.
His portion Cadmus sow'd in Theban fields,
And warriors arm'd the breathing furrow yields;
Contentious brood they bath'd in kindred gore;
And only they surviv'd, whom Cadmus bore,
As denizens his rising walls to fill;
The parent field its earth-born children till.
The seed Æetes to their hands consign'd,
With readiness that spoke the rancorous mind;
Though to the yoke the fiery steers should bend,
The toil, he trusts, will in their ruin end.
  Beneath the' horizon now the sun declin'd,
His course where Ethiopian summits bind;
Night yok'd her sable steeds. Along the sand,
Stretch'd near their cables, slept the' heroic band.
But Jason slumber from his eye repell'd,
And fix'd on heav'n his anxious looks he held;
Resplendent 'mid the starry host from far,
The bear of Helicè had turn'd her star,
No noise was heard along the wat'ry scene,
Nor breeze nor cloud deform'd the blue serene.
'Twas now the time. With silent, stealthy pace,
The son of Æson sought a lonely place.
He bore each requisite for solemn rite,
With care collected, ere the' approach of night.
Part in the fold and dairy Argus sought;
A female lamb and tepid milk he brought.
The rest the ship supplied. The hero found,
Far from the beaten path, a space of ground,
With streams irriguous springing fresh and clear.
He bath'd his tender limbs with pious fear,

In the pure lymph; and o'er his shoulders threw
A robe from Lemnos brought of sable hue,
Gift of Hypsipilé, design'd to prove
A sad memorial of ill-fated love.
A cubit then in depth a trench he made,
And wood for sacrifice in order laid.
The victim bleeds extended on the pyre,
And all the hallow'd pile receives the fire;
As o'er the flames the mix'd libation falls,
On Brimo Hecaté the votary calls.
'Tremendous pow'r, assist my future toil;'
With backward steps he slowly trod the soil.
From deep recesses, awful pow'r, she heard,
And, rising, at the potent call appear'd:
Envenom'd snakes with oaken boughs entwin'd,
Terrific wreath! her awful temples bind.
A mighty glare of torches flamed around,
And dogs of hell were heard with piercing sound.
The meadows trembled as she mov'd along;
The Naiads wail'd the lakes and rills among.
Loud shriek'd the nymphs, that in the marshes lave,
Where Amarantian Phasis seeks the wave;
Amaze and fear the soul of Jason felt,
Yet in his thoughts Medea's warning dwelt.
With firm resolve he backward trod the plain;
Nor turn'd him ere he reach'd the social train.
When morn began, fair daughter of the spring,
Her beams on snowy Caucasus to fling,
Æetes rose, and clad his giant frame
In ponderous arms; a gift from Mars they came.
When sunk Phlegrean Mimas bath'd in gore,
His bloody spoils the' immortal victor tore.
The golden helmet grac'd the monarch's head,
A fourfold cone its bright effulgence shed,

From far refulgent, like that orb of day,
When, bath'd in ocean, he renews his ray.
A vast expansive shield his left hand holds,
Where thickest hides are plac'd in numerous folds.
His right hand grasps the' inevitable spear,
Weighty and vast, the messenger of fear;
The king excepted, in the' embattled field
Alcides only could that weapon wield.
In youthful grace fair Phaeton [27] attends,
And holds the chariot ere his sire ascends.
The king ascending seiz'd the flowing reins,
And pass'd the city gates to reach the plains,
Scene of the' intended trial. O'er the road
His course he held extended long and broad.
Forth rush'd the Colchians, an unnumber'd throng,
The king, like car-borne Neptune, rode along,
When Isthmian games, divine spectator, bring
The god to Tænarus [28], or Lerna's spring.
Onchestus' hallow'd grove, Euboic seat,
Or Calaureia, his belov'd retreat.
He seeks, emergent from the sounding floods,
The' Æmonian rock, Gerestus cloth'd in woods.
The youth, admonish'd by the royal maid,
Dissolv'd the drug, and on his armour laid.
Full soon the massy buckler's polish'd orb,
The spear, and trenchant blade, that charm absorb;
Around the youth his brave companions stand,
And try the polish'd arms with vig'rous hand.
To bend his pondrous lance, that gallant train
Their utmost efforts prove, and prove in vain.

[27] Phaeton, son to Æetes.

[28] For an account of the places here mentioned, the reader is referred to the notes at the end.

The son of Aphareus [29] with rage beheld,
Presumption vain his haughty bosom swell'd.
His mighty falchion at the spear he aim'd,
Where nigh the point the brazen circles flam'd;
On the firm anvil, as the hammer sounds,
The falchion fell, the blunted edge rebounds;
With joyful shouts the warriors rent the air,
And augur'd to their toils an issue fair.
Now Jason to his limbs that charm applied;
And matchless energy the drug supplied,
Ineffable, tremendous in the fight;
Unmov'd he stood, exulting in his might.
Redoubled courage fill'd his ardent breast;
Redoubled strength his valiant hand possess'd;
And hope elates his heart, and brightens on his crest.
As when the charger of illustrious strain
The battle scents, and paws the sounding plain;
In pride of strength his haughty crest he rears;
At ev'ry sound he pricks his watchful ears;
O'er his arch'd neck the floating mane is cast;
His nostrils broad propel the' impetuous blast;
In youthful glory beautiful and strong,
The son of Æson bounded mid the throng.
Swift as the lightning, in a wintry night,
From pitchy darkness vibrates sudden light;
Now here, now there, it glances through the sky,
And tells the' affrighted world a storm is nigh;
So Jason mov'd his polish'd shield and lance,
That quick and dazzling shot a fiery glance.
Now came that awful conflict big with fate.
The band in order on their benches sate;

[29] Idas.

By sounding oars, and sinewy arms impell'd,
Their course to reach that field of Mars they held.
A space like those, that goal and barrier part,
Where rival charioteers display their art,
When prizes are proclaim'd, and lists outspread,
To honour some illustrious chieftain dead;
And horse and foot the ceremonies grace,
With speed contending in the measur'd space,
Divides the' imperial seat of Colchian pride,
From that domain of Mars the homicide.
Æetes with the Colchian race they found.
The lofty rocks of Caucacus around
The crowd possess'd; beside the river hoar
The monarch stood, upon the winding shore.
The band with cables made their vessel fast,
And Jason to that arduous trial pass'd.
His shield and spear he grasp'd with eager hand,
And from the deck sprang lightly to the land:
The polish'd helmet's shining brass he took,
And in its womb the serpent's teeth he shook.
Nor ponderous mail his active limbs oppress'd;
Nor scaly cuirass beam'd around his breast.
Unarm'd he stood, half like the god of war,
Half like the lord of the diurnal car,
And golden brand. His eyes around he threw,
The brazen yoke was laid within his view;
And near the plough with adamantine share.
The crisis bids him for the toil prepare.
The youth approach'd, advancing o'er the ground,
And planted deep the spear with ringlets bound.
Weighty and strong, erect it stood in earth;
Near lay the teeth of that envenom'd birth,
Within the helmet. Cover'd by his shield,
To seek the bulls he march'd along the field.

When sudden, from the stalls beneath the ground,
Dark clouds of smoke diffus'd their volumes round.
Seen through the blackness by the lurid glare,
Disgorging fire, up-rush'd the fatal pair.
That object struck with fear the' heroic bands;
To meet the rageful monsters Jason stands,
Striding unmov'd, as rocks within the deep,
When mountain billows break, and torrents sweep.
His shield oppos'd to meet their wrath he bore,
With levell'd horns they came and furious roar.
In vain their fury the brave youth assail'd;
Nor force immense nor volley'd fire prevail'd.
On the red furnace, where the metals glow,
Through many an orifice, as founders blow,
And now the bellows urge the raging fire,
And pausing now the' enfeebled flames retire,
Loud and impetuous roars the blast beneath,
At intervals; the bulls with fiery breath
Now pause—and now, the flamy volumes drive,
Quick, noxious, as the cloud when lightnings rive,
With sound tremendous. But they smote unharm'd
The dauntless youth, with magic influence arm'd.
Now by the horns, with such commanding might,
He seiz'd the bull that stood upon his right;
Superior force his dangerous captive held,
And to the yoke the struggling beast compell'd.
His foot the brazen hoof, with nimble stroke,
Supplants, and brings him kneeling to the yoke.
An equal fate his fierce companion found,
The youthful hero brought him to the ground;
His ample buckler on the plain he cast,
And firmly striding grasp'd the monsters fast.

Outstretch'd at length, with broad and nervous breast,
The struggling bulls incumbent he oppress'd;
Smoke wreath'd around him, darted flames were roll'd;
With hand intrepid he retain'd his hold.
The savage monarch with amaze survey'd
The force and courage by the youth display'd.
Nor then regardless were the gallant pair,
The sons of Tyndarus and Leda fair:
Appointed service, near the yokes they stand,
They raise from earth, they give to Jason's hand.
These o'er each monster's neck he firmly brac'd,
Then fair between the brazen pole he plac'd;
And threw the ring that from the' extreme depends
O'er the sharp hook, that from the yoke extends.
Back from the noxious glare and scorching heat,
The' illustrious brothers to their ship retreat.
In haste from earth the hero caught his shield,
And o'er his shoulders cast its orbed field;
His polish'd helm he seiz'd, no common weight,
Replete with dragon's teeth, tremendous freight!
His ponderous javelin by the midst he held.
The biting point the' indignant beasts impell'd;
Like the sharp goad by rustic hands applied,
Deep in their flanks the polish'd brass he dyed.
He guides the plough-tail with unerring hand,
Compacted firm in adamantine band:
The toiling monsters roar'd with fruitless ire,
And darted from their mouths redoubled fire;
Loud and impetuous was their stormy breath,
As blasts that menace mariners with death,
When mountain-high devouring waves prevail,
And fearful hands contract the shivering sail.

Not long they mov'd obedient to the spear,
Ere the rude earth was open'd in the rear;
The ploughman stout and potent steers combin'd,
Ample and broad the furrow trac'd behind.
O dire the crash! the sound was heard afar,
From all the broken clods, that teem'd with war.
The youth pursuing with intrepid breast,
And footsteps firm, the path of danger press'd.
With hand unsparing, onward as he pass'd,
O'er the plough'd land the dragon's teeth he cast;
And oft he turn'd, oft anxious ey'd the soil,
Lest giant harvests should prevent his toil,
While pressing onward, o'er the stubborn plain,
The brazen-footed bulls their toil sustain.
When three full portions of the time were spent,
From dawn of morning to the sun's descent;
And gladsome now their weary task to leave,
The workmen hail the sweet approach of eve;
The' unwearied ploughman triumph'd in his toil,
O'er all the large allotted space of soil.
Four acres lay upturn'd, the share beneath,
All fully saturate with dragon's teeth.
The fiery monsters from the yoke he freed,
And drove them terrified along the mead.
He gaz'd around. The furrows still remain
A blank, unpeopled by the giant train.
The ship he sought, and join'd the gallant crew,
Then in his helm the cooling beverage drew;
Gladly the youth indulg'd in transient rest;
With words of hope his comrades cheer'd his breast.
His heart expanded with increasing might,
Like the fierce boar impatient for the fight,
Who whets his tusks, and musters all his wrath,
And foaming waits the hunter in his path.

But now the land its horrid harvest brings:
A giant arm'd from ev'ry furrow springs;
And helms, and shields, and lances, all around,
Like bearded corn rose bristling o'er the ground,
The sacred space of Mars, the scourge of man.
To heav'n's high vaults the gleaming splendours ran.
When wintry storms, surcharg'd with vapours, flow,
And heap along the ground the drifted snow,
The clouds disperse, and through the gloom of night
The starry train emerge in dazzling light;
Thus sudden brightness shot along the land.
Admonish'd by the virgin's wise command,
A circling stone, of mighty weight and size,
A disk for dreadful Mars the youth espies;
Scarce could four men the' enormous mass sustain,
With ease the hero rais'd it from the plain;
Then rushing forward, with a sudden bound,
Aloft in air he hurl'd it, round and round.
Distant it fell amid the' embattled field;
The youth collected shrunk behind his shield,
Yet with intrepid heart. The Colchians roar,
Like billows when they lash the rocky shore.
With mute and blank amaze their king beheld,
What force stupendous the huge disk impell'd.
In combat loud, as barking dogs engage,
Those earth-born brothers round that discus rage,
With hideous din, and by each other's hand,
Pierc'd through with spears, they sunk along the land.
Like oaks uprooted by the whirlwind's sway,
Or mountain pines o'erturn'd in ranks, they lay.
As shoots a star portentous to mankind,
And falling draws a train of light behind;
So bright at once, and terrible to view,
The youthful warrior on the giants flew,

The naked falchion lighten'd in his hand,
And wounds promiscuous fell'd the rising band.
Some half ascended into life he found;
Some to the breast yet struggling in the ground;
Some newly freed stood upright on the soil;
Some forward rush'd, to claim the martial toil.
As when a land becomes the seat of war,
The farmer marks the foe's approach from far;
And lest the spoilers should possess the grain,
Anticipates the harvest of the plain;
The curving sickle newly edg'd he bears,
And o'er the furrows fall the' unripen'd ears;
He bears the corn with fearful haste away,
Ere yet its tinge bespeaks the solar ray;
Dire harvest, Jason reap'd that earth-born brood;
And all the' o'erflowing furrows boil'd with blood.
Swell'd by continual rains, as torrents spread
Despise their banks and inundate the mead,
In various postures they resign'd their breath,
And grim and diverse were the forms of death.
Some bit the' empurpled earth, and prostrate lay;
Some backward fell, and breath'd their souls away;
Some lean'd half-rais'd, and panted to the wind;
Some sidelong writh'd, in agonies reclin'd,
Then sunk, extended in eternal sleep;
Like mighty whales, that slumber o'er the deep.
Entangled some, fast rooted in the ground,
With head inclining droop'd beneath the wound;
High as erewhile to heav'n they rear'd the crest,
So low they sunk with damps of death oppress'd;
Thus youthful plants, surcharg'd with storm and rain,
Hang their moist heads, and languish to the plain,
Bent from the roots; the gardener, in despair,
Surveys the prostrate offspring of his care;

And weeps his toils defrauded of their scope,
The pride of autumn lost, Pomona's ravish'd hope.
Such grief and rage the monarch's bosom knew,
As o'er the' expiring train he cast his view.
He sought the city with the Colchian throng,
Resolving vengeance as he mov'd along.
The second conflict with the day was clos'd,
The sun declin'd, and all the train repos'd.

THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT.

ÆETES begins to suspect that his daughters, particularly Medea, must have had some share in the unexpected success of Jason.—He calls a council of his confidential friends, by night.—Medea is alarmed, and dreads the vengeance of her father.—Her first thoughts on the occasion lead her to end her life by poison.—Through the influence of Juno she resolves, after a conflict between love and fear, and the sense of duty, to fly from Colchos with the Argonauts.—She leaves the city by night, and joins Jason and his companions at the ship.—Their meeting described.—The fleece of gold.—The dragon that guarded it described.—Jason is aided by Medea, lulls the latter to rest, and gains possession of the former.—Medea sails with the adventurers for Greece.—Æetes pursues them.—The Argonauts, having crossed the Euxine sea, sail up the Ister.—Absyrtus, the brother of Medea, is murdered, through the contrivance of that princess and the treachery of Jason.—The pollution, induced by this act of cruelty, is expiated by Circe, at whose island the Minyæ land.—Thetis

and her nymphs conduct the vessel through the straits of Scylla and Charybdis.—The Argonauts sail past the islands of the Sirens, from whose enchantments they are preserved by Orpheus.—At Corcyra, they encounter the Colchians, who pursued them through the Symplegades.—The Colchians importune Alcinous, king of the island, to deliver up Medea to them, that they may restore her to her father.—The monarch consents to send her back to her father, provided she is yet unmarried; declaring at the same time, that, if she is already united to Jason, he will not part man and wife: by the contrivance of Arete, wife to Alcinous, the nuptials of Medea and Jason are immediately celebrated; and Alcinous protects the lovers.—The Argonauts again put to sea, and are driven on the quicksands of Africa; where they are in danger of perishing.—They are extricated from the present distress by the tutelary deities of the country.—The Minyæ bear the vessel on their shoulders to the lake Tritonis.—The Hesperides, whom they find bewailing the loss of their dragon, slain the preceding day by Hercules, give them some tidings of that hero.—Fruitless attempt to overtake him.—Death of Canthus, and of Mopsus.—Triton appears.—His figure particularly described.—He gives the heroes information and directions respecting the remainder of their voyage.—The Argonauts pass near Crete.—Marvellous adventure and death of Talus.—At Hippuris, the adventurers sacrifice to Phebus, who, standing on the top of a hill, enlightens their way.—A clod of earth, which has been given to Euphemus by Triton, is thrown into the sea, and becomes an island, named Calliste.—The Minyæ anchor at the island of Ægina, where they water, and loosing from thence, arrive without further interruption on the coast of Thessaly.

Yet once again I court the Muses' aid.
The toils, the counsels of the Colchian maid
Demand the song. O virgin child of Jove,
Doubt and confusion from my soul remove,

Decide the theme—what ills from fate she bore,
Her flight immodest from the native shore,
And kindred people. Mid the gloom of night,
With thirst of vengeance fill'd and stern despite,
The king convok'd the chieftains of his land,
Within the palace, an afflicted band.
His meditations on the conflicts dwell,
And black suspicions on his daughters fell.
Then Juno struck the royal maid with fear[1];
She trembled, like the young and timid deer,
Which opening hounds with loud alarm o'ertake
In deep recesses of the tangled brake.
She deems the secret to her father known,
And every shape of misery her own.
Her conscious maidens wake foreboding fears;
Fire fill'd her eyes, and tingling sounds her ears.
Dire were the shrieks of anguish and despair;
She smote her breast, she rent her flowing hair.
In poison had she sought relief from pain,
And render'd the designs of Juno vain;
But pow'r divine her changeful purpose bore,
With Phryxus' offspring to forsake the shore.
A dawning hope her rapid thoughts embrac'd.
Drawn from the casket, in her breast she plac'd
The magic hoard of drugs. She kiss'd her bed,
And parting tears with eager passion shed.
Her fond embraces both the door-posts clasp'd,
And all around the' accustom'd walls she grasp'd;
A token then, to the maternal fair,
Tore from her beauteous head a tress of hair,
Sad, sad memorial of her virgin hours,
Offering to duty's violated pow'rs.

[1] That she might visit Greece, and execute the vengeance of Juno.

She calls her mother's name with heartfelt sighs:
'And oh! farewell my parent dear, (she cries)
Far when I fly, may health and peace be thine;
This lock alone remain of what was mine.
Farewell my sister; farewell household train;
Farewell the parent walls, the native plain.
Had billows circled o'er that stranger's head,
Ere to these shores in evil hour he sped!
Bane of my virtue!'—Thus her grief she told,
While bursting tears in ceaseless torrents roll'd.
When cruel fate bids some fair captive roam,
Reluctant slow she leaves her splendid home;
To grief unbroken, new to pain and toil,
She goes to meet them on a distant soil:
In soft indulgence nurs'd the darling child,
Of pride parental, and affection mild;
Sad change! to prove on some ungenial land,
The task degrading, and the stern command;
Thus, driven by tyrant love and fortune's hate,
The royal virgin goes to meet her fate.
The bolts and bars obey the magic song,
And ope spontaneous as she pass'd along.
The' expanded barriers own'd enchanted sway,
Through narrow paths she took her stealthy way.
Her feet are naked, on her gracious brows,
And blooming cheek, the veil her left hand throws;
The border of her robe the right sustains.
With darkling pace the city wall she gains.
Through the vast city borne in wild affright,
No warder from the turrets mark'd her flight;
To seek the fane her eager thoughts were bent,
By paths frequented oft with dire intent.
Where slept the dead within the heaving ground,
And noxious herbs, and potent drugs, were found.

Here had she sought materials for her charms,
And torn the lingering roots replete with harms.
As now she wander'd through the confines drear,
Her conscious bosom throbb'd with guilty fear.
The goddess of the silver crescent rose,
And look'd complacent on her frantic woes,
An object meet to justify her love.
'What though (she said) to Latmian [2] caves I rove;
Not unexampled in my wild desire,
I seek Endymion with incessant fire.
Thou too, enchantress, of undaunted breast,
Thou bold intruder on Diana's rest,
Whose guilty tongue renew'd the' insidious strain,
To wake the feelings of my am'rous pain,
That Cynthia might withdraw her sacred light,
And free to magic leave the murky night,
That mutter'd spells might uncontrolled prevail,
And corses rise beneath the glimpses pale.
Wretch, thou hast prov'd the' inevitable hour;
Thy harden'd nature bows to Cupid's power;
The god, the god, has wing'd his burning dart,
And Jason's image revels in thy heart.
Go, dext'rous as thou art in spells and charms,
Redeem thy soul from these delicious harms.
Go, if thou canst the fatal pangs avoid,
That gods torment, and mortals have destroy'd.'
Each nerve in flight meantime the virgin strain'd;
Oh, with what joy the river's bank she gain'd!
Led by the fires, that through the festive night
Gleam'd clear in honour of the prosp'rous fight.
As round the flame the gallant train rejoice,
Roll'd through the gloom, they hear a plaintive voice.

[2] The caves of Mount Latmus, where she was fabled to have met Endymion.

For as Medea climb'd the rising ground,
On Phrontis' name she call'd, with shrilly sound,
Of Phryxus youngest born; through darkness drear,
The well-known accents vibrate on his ear.
His brothers knew the voice, and Jason knew;
Then silent wonder seiz'd the youthful crew.
Thrice call'd the princess. Urg'd by all the crowd,
The son of Phryxus answer'd thrice aloud.
Nor yet their halsers on the bank were laid;
With eager oars they press to reach the maid.
From the high deck the youthful leader darts,
With all the fire that sanguine hope imparts;
With Argus Phrontis, springing to the shore,
The kindred mourner through the gloom explore.
The brothers stood the' afflicted maid beside.
She clasp'd their knees, and supplicating cried:
'Save me, lov'd youths, preserve yourselves and me
From stern Æetes and perdition free;
All is betray'd. No hope for us remains,
Save in some vessel, and the wat'ry plains.
Swift let us fly ere he ascends his car,
With rapid steeds to chase us from afar;
The golden fleece, fruit of my bounty, take;
My philtres shall subdue that watchful snake.
But, stranger, raise to heav'n thy pious hand,
And join the gods to this assembled band;
Call them in witness of thy plighted word,
Bid them thy oaths, thy promises record.
Should I for thee forsake my friends and home,
For thee to distant climes an exile roam.
Swear thou wilt not such confidence betray;
Thou wilt not leave me, to contempt a prey;
Swear that of kindred, home, and friends bereft,
I shall not be a wretched outcast left.'

Plaintive she spoke, while piteous tears distill'd;
But secret joy the soul of Jason fill'd.
He gently rais'd her as his knees she grasp'd,
And soothing mild, in fond embraces clasp'd:
'Hear me, my fairest. In this awful hour
I call on Jove, and every heav'nly pow'r;
On Juno chief, the spouse of ruling Jove,
The sacred arbitress of wedded love.
Within my native home thou shalt preside;
Queen of my heart, my darling, and my bride.'
Then for assurance of the mutual breast,
The virgin's hand with plighted hand he press'd.
Now were the train admonish'd by the maid,
To ply their oars, and gain the sacred shade;
And thence by nightly stealth the fleece convey
Ere stern Æetes should their course delay.
The train obey, by hopes and fears impell'd;
Their ship they enter'd, and their oars they held.
They push'd from land incumbent on their oars,
Their clamours echoed through the winding shores.
Then turning towards the plain, the afflicted fair
Stretch'd forth her beauteous hands in mute despair.
Now had she rush'd a wat'ry death to find,
But Jason sooth'd her agonizing mind;
And gentle force her frantic will restrain'd;
And now the ship the' appointed station gain'd.
What time the wakeful hunters ope their eyes,
And call their dogs, and to the chase arise;
Whose early sports anticipate the morn,
And rouse the covert with the hound and horn;
Ere from the dewy ground the solar ray
Drinks the light traces, and the scent away;
The youthful leader with his virgin guide,
Debark'd upon the river's grassy side.

There where the fabled ram, with toil oppress'd,
First reach'd the strand, and bending sunk to rest,
When o'er the sounding waves from shore to shore,
The wandering son of Athamas he bore.
And near, with smoky base, an altar stood,
That Phryxus rear'd retiring from the flood,
To Jove[3] the stranger's friend, whose guardian [might
Protects the suffering exile in his flight;
And there, obedient to what Hermes told,
He offer'd up the ram with fleece of gold.
By Argus warn'd, the social band withdrew;
The' adventurous path the chief and maid pursue.
Along that path the sacred grove they sought,
Where tow'r'd the beech, with fleecy treasure fraught,
They see the plant its giant arms unfold,
And bright between appears the pendent gold,
Like flaming clouds, with curling radiance bright,
That blush illumin'd by the dawning light.
The watchful dragon, that the fleece defends,
A length immense his waving neck extends.
Onward the lovers move; his eyeballs flame,
And direful hissings their advance proclaim.
Baleful and shrill was that ill-omen'd sound;
The' extended shores re-echoed all around.
They heard, who, far from the Titanian strand,
Plough the wide limits of the Colchian land;
Where Lycus from Araxes loud divides,
And joys, with Phasis mix'd, to roll his sacred tides.
Scar'd by the noise, the mothers start from rest,
And press their new-born infants to the breast.
From burning woods ascending to the pole,
As globes of smoke in fiery volumes roll,

[3] He was worshipped under the name of Jupiter Phyxius.

Cloud urges cloud, the' incessant vapours rise,
Enormous wreaths, and whirl along the skies;
The monster huge impell'd his countless spires,
O'erlaid with scales, that shone like distant fires.
Onward he labour'd with tremendous sway;
The maid advanc'd, and stood athwart his way.
With softest sweetest notes she call'd a pow'r,
Bland, but sufficient in that dangerous hour;
With warbled strain she call'd the god of sleep,
In Lethe's dew those watchful eyes to steep:
Yet more she summons from beneath the ground,
The queen rever'd in shades of night profound.
'Rise, awful Hecatè, propitious pow'r,
Aid the bold purpose of this fatal hour!'
Brave as he was, and oft in perils tried,
With faltering steps the youth pursued his guide.
Now wrought the mystic charm with potent sway.
Entranc'd, dissolv'd the dreadful monster lay,
With spine relax'd, extended o'er the plain,
In orbs diffuse uncoil'd his scaly train.
When breezes fill the' expansive sail no more,
And not a wave is heard to lash the shore,
In placid silence thus the billows sleep,
And languid curls are spread along the deep.
Yet still aloft his horrid head he rear'd,
And still in act to close his jaws appear'd
With dreadful menace. But the nymph display'd
A mystic bough, cut from the sacred shade,
A branch of juniper in drugs bedew'd,
With potency by magic spell imbued.
Melodious charm her tuneful voice applies;
She waves her opiate o'er the monster's eyes.
Diffus d around narcotic vapour flows;
The dragon sinks subdued in deep repose,

Unmoving, harmless as the silent dead;
His gaping jaws were fix'd, he hung his head;
And spreading like some vast meand'ring flood,
His powerless volumes stretch'd along the wood.
Exhorted by the maid, without delay,
The youth approach'd the tree to seize the prey;
While, near the dragon fix'd, the' intrepid maid
O'er his dire head the flattering unction laid.
She waited thus unmov'd and unappall'd,
Till to the ship the youth her steps recall'd,
When now departing from the sacred grove,
He gave the sign of safety and of love.
As when, exulting in reflected light,
The full-orb'd moon displays the torch of night;
Some maid delighted sees the splendour fall
On the high ceiling, or the chamber wall;
Around she sees the circling lustre dance,
And spreads her veil to catch the' illusive glance;
So joy'd the youthful hero, to behold
The light reflected from the fleece of gold;
While as he bore the glorious prize on high,
The ruddy splendours lighten'd to the sky.
O'er his fresh cheek the fiery lustre beams,
The radiance on his front of ivory streams.
That fleece was ample as an heifer's hide,
Or skin of hinds, that in Achaia bide;
So large it spread with the metallic freight,
Of golden locks that curl'd, enormous weight.
The rays were darted round so bright and strong,
The path seem'd gilded as he strode along.
O'er his broad shoulders now the treasure flung,
Descending ponderous to his footsteps hung;
Now in his hands the precious fleece he holds,
And turns with anxious care the shining folds;

While round his eyes are glanc'd with jealous fear,
Lest god or mortal should the conquest bear.
Now rose Aurora, blushing from the main.
The youthful lovers join'd the social train.
In mute amaze that gallant band survey
The fleece, refulgent with a fiery ray;
As bright, as flaming as the bolt of Jove,
And all to touch the sacred burden strove.
The youth forbade, and from their sight withdrew.
A new-wrought mantle o'er the fleece he threw.
Then near the helm he plac'd the royal maid,
And, turning to his brave companions, said:
'No more despondence shall afflict this band;
Despair no longer of your native land;
The vast emprize, that most allur'd and griev'd,
Hope of our toil and perils, is achiev'd.
Behold this lovely maid with grateful hearts,
Ascribe your safety to her prosperous arts.
Her to my home a virgin bride I bear,
Alike from gratitude and beauty dear.
If charms, if benefits may claim your aid,
My friends will guard our tutelary maid,
Whose hand beneficent bestows the fleece,
And home conducts you to your loves in Greece.
But think not yet our labours at an end;
What art obtain'd your valour must defend.
Æetes soon with savage throngs will sweep,
To bar our exit to the friendly deep;
Some urge the vessel from these dangerous shores,
Set man to man alternate at your oars.
Half grasp the shield compact of many a hide;
And be the foes in open fight defied.
Each in that hour will feel upon his hand,
Loves, children, parents, friends, his native land,

All that, possess'd, delights the human heart;
All, all that lost affliction can impart.
'This moment calls us to renown or shame.'
He ceas'd. His arms around the hero flame.
Loud shouts of ardour burst from all the crew,
Their leader from the sheath his falchion drew;
Nor weak nor erring hand the halser smote,
And free from land he sees the vessel float.
Then near Ancæus, while the helm he sway'd,
In arms he stood, beside the plighted maid.
Urg'd by the' exertions of that vigorous throng,
To pass the flood the vessel shot along.
Now from the meanest Colchian to the throne,
Medea's love and deeds by all were known.
In armour clad the crowds to council haste,
Numerous as billows with the wintry blast;
Numerous as leaves in forests strew the ground,
When chiding autumn bids her gale resound;
Thus countless they, in many a crowded rank,
With noise and fury fill'd the river's bank.
With steeds illustrious, and his polish'd car,
Amid the crowd Æetes shone from far;
The steeds, donation of his sire the sun,
Were swift as winds, or flying sounds, to run.
While in the left his circling shield he took,
A branch of flaming pine his right hand shook:
Beside him lay his spear's enormous length,
Of weight prodigious, and resistless strength.
With dextrous hand Absyrtus held the reins.
Meantime, the welcome deep the vessel gains,
Driv'n by the force combin'd of youthful arms,
And prosperous currents, from that land of harms.
Æetes view'd, with anguish and dismay—
To Jove appealing and the solar ray,

With hands uprais'd: 'Ye gods, to whom belongs,
All-seeing pow'rs, the punishment of wrongs,
Receive my vows, my direful curses hear!
And you, my subjects, if my wrath ye fear,
O'ertake these traitors, if the land they keep;
O'ertake their vessel, if she ploughs the deep;
Regain that wanton from the miscreant band;
Bring her to feel a wrathful father's hand.
Let vengeance swiftly seize the caitiff crew;
In combat quell them, or in flight pursue.'
He ceas'd. That very day, with active care,
Their ships and stores the Colchian band prepare;
That very day their vessels plough'd the wave,
And sails unnumber'd to the breezes gave.
Not ships but feather'd flocks the vessels seem,
That urge their flight with many a shrilly scream.
Meantime, the Grecian vessel wing'd her path,
Charg'd with the messenger[4] of heav'nly wrath;
The breezes, that with Juno's will conspire,
To Pelias waft the creature of her ire.
When the third morning came, the Grecian band
Their vessel moor'd on Paphlagonia's strand;
Where sounding Halys rushes to the deep
They land, the rites of Hecatè to keep;
So bids the maid. No conscious heart shall know
Those mystic rites, no rhymes irreverent show;
Be far from such attempt, my pious song;
To night and awful silence they belong.
Yet still the structure crowns the sounding shore,
Rais'd by those heroes in the times of yore.
Now Jason calls to mind the prescient strain,
Alike remember'd by the social train:

[4] Medea. See notes at the end, and the text ante.

How Phineus sung, that, having won the fleece,
A different course should lead them home to Greece;
But what the destin'd course in doubt remain'd,
Till Argus thus the latent truth explain'd.

'To reach Orchomenus, we trace the way
Describ'd by Phineus in prophetic lay.
That mariners a varying track may hold
The sacred ministers of heav'n unfold;
They who the worship of the gods attend,
Where Thebes[5] beholds Tritonian tow'rs ascend.
Oldest of mortals they who peopled earth,
Ere yet in heav'n the radiant signs had birth.
The Danai, sacred race, were then unknown;
The' Arcadians held the plains of Greece alone,
On acorns wont, in silvan wilds, to feed,
Ere men the lunar wand'rings learn'd to read;
Ere yet the heroes of Deucalion's blood,
Pelasgia peopled with a glorious brood.
The fertile plains of Egypt flourish'd then,
Productive cradle of the first of men.
There Triton, beauteous stream, irriguous flows,
And o'er the' expanse fertility bestows.
No rains from heav'n bedew the farmer's toil,
But inundations bathe the pregnant soil;
From thence, 'tis said, o'er many a distant land
A valiant chieftain led his hardy band.
Heroic guide of heroes to the fight,
With Europe, Asia bow'd beneath his might.
Yet not to ravage o'er the land he spread,
For walls he rais'd, and colonies he led;
A thousand states his conquering arms assail'd,
A favour'd few o'er war and time prevail'd;

[5] In Egypt.

Of most nor trace nor memory appears,
For ever swallow'd in the' abyss of years;
But, firm through ages, Æa's walls remain,
Firm the descendants of that martial train,
Whom to that station first the warrior drew,
When o'er the land his conquering myriads flew.
Still they preserve, with reverential awe,
Sacred memorials of their ancient law;
And tablets, sculptur'd in the times of old,
The paths and bounds of earth and seas unfold;
What course the deeps to mariners expand,
And what the plains to those who traverse land.
Of spreading ocean the remotest horn,
Ample and deep a mighty stream is borne.
From springs remote his sounding waters glide,
And loaded ships may on his bosom ride,
Majestic Ister. From Riphean hills,
Fill'd with the tribute of a thousand rills,
Swoln with the melting of perpetual snow,
Beyond the seats where Boreas 'gins to blow,
O'er many a region, from his mountain source,
He rolls at first with undivided force. [gains,
When Scythian realms and Thracia's bound he
In sever'd streams he rushes o'er the plains.
One arm to meet the' Ionian wave he guides,
And one he sends, to swell Trinacria's tides
Through the deep bay, that joins my native coast[6];
If I may knowledge of tradition boast.'
He ceas'd. The queen of heav'n a sign display'd,
Auspicious omen of celestial aid.
The heroes shout, exulting at the view,
And urge their chief his voyage to pursue;

[6] This is a very difficult passage in the original: the geography of the poet is rather unintelligible.

To mark the course, where leading meteors fly,
And lambent lightnings flash along the sky.
Here Lycus' offspring [7] separates from the band,
And seeks his father's court, and native land.
They plough the waves, the wind their canvass fills,
They hold in view the Paphlagonian hills.
Not round Carambis do they wind their way,
But breathing gales, and heav'nly fires obey;
For still the breeze prevail'd, and splendour glow'd,
Until they came where swelling Ister flow'd.
Their frustrate hours meantime the Colchians waste,
Through the Cyanean rocks a squadron pass'd.
Led by their youthful prince, a different train
Explor'd the seats where Ister seeks the main.
To cut off all retreat his course he sped
Across a branch where parted Ister spread;
Thence onward, round the narrow point of land,
His ships anticipate the Grecian band;
And while they [8] sail the jutting headland round,
By route compendious gain the' Ionian bound,
Indented bay. By Ister's arms embrac'd,
In form triangular an isle is plac'd;
Peuce its name; that, dark with stately pines,
The spreading outlet of the stream confines.
The vertex meets the current and divides,
The' extended base resists the roaring tides;
The flood becomes another and the same;
Each parted branch assumes a diff'rent name.
Above, the turbid Arax seeks the waves;
That isle below the smoother Calon laves.
Through this the prince his Colchian followers drew;
The branch superior while the Greeks pursue.

7 Dascylus. 8 *i. e.* The Argonauts.

There wide the verdant pastures were display'd;
And flocks, deserted by their keepers, stray'd.
The rude and timorous natives of the plain
Seem'd to behold, emergent from the main,
Devouring monsters, vast in bulk, arise;
For ships were strangers to their simple eyes;
And never yet the neighbouring tribes of Thrace
Had mix'd in commerce with the Scythian race,
The wild Sigynian, the Graucenian bands,
The Sindians, who possess the Laurian lands,
Wide-stretch'd and waste. At such stupendous sight,
The savage tribes their safety plac'd in flight.
Near tall Angurus now the Minyæ steer'd,
And distant now the Cauliac rocks appear'd;
Where bellowing Ister breaks his ample horn,
To meet the waves, in parted channels borne.
Now had they coasted the Talaurian land,
By shorter progress, while the Colchian band
Had reach'd already to the Chronian deep,
And all the outlets of the river keep;
Where, as they deem'd, the Greeks their course must shape,
That none the vengeance of their king might 'scape.
Not so the wary Minyæ. Far behind
A safer passage up the stream they find;
Two isles they reach, to virgin Dian dear,
To Dian whom the' Illyrian tribes revere.
One sacred structure boasts her awful fane,
One from their ship receives the' adventurous train,
Safe from the myriads, that, athirst for war,
With young Absyrtus guard the coast afar.
Those isles they shunn'd; for reverence of the place
Restrain'd the fury of that savage race.

But, these except, beset with arms they found
Each isle and shore that clos'd the channel round.
In every station adverse myriads stood,
To Nestis' plain and to Salanco's flood.
Now crowds prevailing o'er undaunted might,
Had crush'd the Minyæ in unequal fight;
But treaty interrupts the rude alarms,
And sober compact stays the clang of arms.
The Minyæ by concession bear the fleece,
Hope of their voyage, to the shores of Greece;
The prize their chief by bold exertion gain'd,
In dreadful trials by the king ordain'd.
Though force or stratagem possession gave,
Let them retain, and waft it o'er the wave.
But for the maid, chief subject of debate,
In Dian's fane let her the future wait,
Till sceptred wisdom shall her fate decide;
Or, home returning, with her sire to bide,
Or with the sons of Phryxus, to explore
Unknown Orchomenus and Pthia's shore;
Or yet, more welcome to the' enamour'd fair,
To Hellas with the Grecian chiefs repair.
In such alternatives for peace they sought;
But various passions on the virgin wrought.
She mark'd their views with agonizing mind;
For who the wakeful eyes of love may blind?
Apart their leader from the chiefs she drew,
Alike remote from hearing and from view.
Then streaming tears and mournful sounds express'd
The painful thoughts that labour'd in her breast.
'Oh say, what blow thy secret counsel aims
Against the wretch who thy protection claims.
I know thy purpose; cruel and unjust,
To love injurious, faithless to thy trust.

Think of the splendours I have left for thee;
Think of the dangers whence I set thee free.
Oh think what vows, what promises were made,
In hours of peril, when I lent my aid;
Oh fatal promises! of shame bereft,
Through them, ingrate, my natal soil I left.
Through them, with frantic hand I cast away
Imperial pomp, beneath my parent's sway;
The dearest pledges have I left to weep
With plaintive halcyon, while I roam the deep.
And why? Alas! this dreadful price I give,
That thou may'st triumph; nay, that thou may'st live.
In fatal labours hence hast thou prevail'd,
And bulls' infuriate fire in vain exhal'd;
And hence, ungrateful, did that earth-born band,
Like feeble infants, sink beneath thine hand.
Hope of thy voyage o'er the distant wave,
The precious fleece, my happy rashness gave;
Happy to thee, but fatal to my fame;
To female honesty an endless shame.
What bond with thee a modest maid should send?
Am I thy bride, thy sister, or thy friend?
A time there was, the flatterer would bestow
Each tender name that may from passion flow.
Afflicting change! I feel thy love decline
With cold neglect; the wanton's name is mine.
On different terms I left my regal home,
On different terms with thee I deign'd to roam;
Yet, be it so; the' eternal lot is cast;
The dire irrevocable doom is pass'd.
Alone and friendless in thy train I go,
Heiress of shame, a monument of woe,
Encumbrance now, no partner of thy flight;
Yet drive me not dishonour'd from thy sight.

Leave me not now to sate my father's rage;
My blood alone his fury can assuage.
If any pity in thy breast remains;
If justice in thy soul her sway retains;
If yet remembrance can attention draw
To the soft compact, and the mutual law,
Pass'd in the moment when I thought we lov'd,
Vow'd by the tongue, and by the heart approv'd.
Is this too great a boon—my worthless breath?
Then draw thy sword, and end my woes in death.
Strike here, transfix this heart, 'tis meet I prove
From thee the punishment of foolish love.
Say, should that king, to whom on deep debate,
Inhuman, thou wilt trust a wretch's fate,
Sad office, to pronounce my fatal doom,
To hurl a mourner to the' untimely tomb,
A miserable thrall in that sad hour,
Should he consign me to my brother's pow'r;
Say with what glory should I then appear?
Or how sustain my father's brow severe?
My frantic love what punishments await?
In what dire form must I encounter fate?
Yet hope not thou thy feelings to control,
To lull to rest the self-accusing soul.
For thee no breezes shall propitious blow;
Nor glad return thy guilty sails shall know.
Hope not a blessing from the pow'rs above,
Not even from her the' imperial wife of Jove,
Nor aid nor joy from Juno be supplied,
Friend of thy labours, motive of thy pride.
Avenging furies shall my grief attend,
And late remorse thy perjur'd bosom rend:
And may that precious prize, the fleece of gold,
Fade like a vision from thy vacant hold;

Driv'n from thy native soil to shame and woe,
Medea's anguish thou shalt learn to know.
Thou who shalt cause this doating heart to bleed,
Learn thou, what demons haunt the faithless deed;
In what deep character the gods record
Each violated oath, and impious word.'
She ceas'd at once, with grief and rage oppress'd,
And horrors roll'd tumultuous in her breast;
And now she thought with mad vindictive aims
To hurl the brand, and wrap the ship in flames.
The son of Æson trembles at her rage,
And soothing words her stormy grief assuage.
'My fairest, my espous'd, thy terrors cease;
To that afflicted bosom whisper peace.
Think not so meanly of thy lover's heart,
Where no deceit or treachery has part;
Deem not so lightly of these heav'nly charms;
Think, could I thus resign thee from my arms?
Those terms, so justly hateful in thy sight,
Were proffer'd to suspend the dangerous fight.
For fierce and numerous is the hostile band
Assembled round thy beauties to demand;
With vengeful fury young Absyrtus leads
The crowding natives from the shores and meads.
They think to bear thee a defenceless prey,
And yield thee captive to thy father's sway.
What hopes from combat with that hostile train?
Their numbers render skill and valour vain.
What doom is thine, in battle should we fall,
Expos'd to vengeance, a deserted thrall?
Hence, 'tis the pow'r of artifice we try,
Counsel may give what prowess would deny.
This treaty shall confound the mighty host,
And all their schemes of vengeance shall be lost.

The natives that around by myriads arm,
No more shall strike our bosoms with alarm;
But home dispersing, cease their aid to lend,
While ev'n Absyrtus shall appear our friend.
Abandon'd thus the Colchians shall remain;
Nor fear I then to meet the' embattled train,
Should they presume to thwart my homeward way,
Or think by force to bear thee for their prey.'
Soothing he spake, and her suspicions heal'd;
Her fatal thoughts Medea thus reveal'd:
'Bethink thee, Jason, what the time demands,
Guilt is no stranger to these dangerous hands.
Such dire connection links unhallow'd aims,
Crime builds on crime, and shame engenders shames.
Since heav'n in errors plung'd my wand'ring mind,
From guilt to guilt my desperate path I find.
Meet not the Colchian bands in open field;
My arts their leader to thy pow'r shall yield.
But thou with splendid gifts the way prepare,
That draws the' incautious victim to my snare.
If won by me, in conference apart,
The heralds lend assistance to my art;
What then remains? Absyrtus is our thrall,
He comes defenceless, by thine hand to fall;
'Reft of their leader, should the Colchian band
Provoke the fight, no longer stay thine hand.'
Thus they their thoughts in direful aims employ,
Of mortal mischief to the princely boy;
Dissembled fondness, and perfidious smiles,
And hospitable pledges, mask'd their wiles.
Among the gifts was first and fairest seen
A veil, that grac'd that beauteous Lemnian queen[9],
A radiant purple web with hands of love,
Which heav'nly charities for Bacchus wove.

9 Hypsipile.

Where sounding ocean beats on Dia's shore,
Thoas, his son, receiv'd the gift of yore.
Among the treasures that her father own'd,
Hypsipile the beauteous texture found;
That gift at parting, ere he plough'd the wave,
With toys and gems, her love to Jason gave.
A work more form'd the senses to delight,
Ne'er sooth'd the touch, or glitter'd on the sight.
From all the web ambrosial odours flow'd;
That perfume the Nysæan god [10] bestow'd
In hours of bliss, when, with his ivory arms,
He held entranc'd his Ariadne's charms.
From Knossus her the perjur'd Theseus bore,
And weeping left on Dia's lonely shore.
In converse with the heralds had the maid
In order due her fraudful counsels laid;
Well were they school'd with soothing speech to gain
The youth, and lead him to Diana's fane.
She mark'd the time. When night her veil extends,
And stealth inspires, and fallacy befriends.
Fictitious aims her artful words unfold,
From Jason to withdraw the fleece of gold,
And with the treasure to her father haste,
Peaceful oblation for misconduct pass'd,
No willing exile, so she feign'd, from home,
But forc'd by Phryxus' guilty sons to roam.
The' instructions ended, the delusive fair
Hurl'd spells and philtres through the spungy air,
Of pow'r to stay the wildest mountain flock,
And draw the savage from his cavern'd rock.
Pernicious love, thou scourge of human kind,
Thou bane envenom'd of the reas'ning mind,

[10] Bacchus.

What fell contentions, what distress and woe,
What pangs unnumber'd from thine influence flow!
Sovereign of torments, for our foes alone
Reserve the furies by that virgin known.
O muse, relate what snares Medea spread
To join her brother with the silent dead.
The maiden, as by compact was ordain'd,
Within the fane of Artemis remain'd.
The Colchian vessels part. The Greeks display
Their sails, and homeward seem to shape their way.
Deceitful seeming! Jason and his band,
With mortal purpose, took their ambush'd stand;
In arms relentless, working to destroy,
With all his train that unsuspecting boy.
The fatal promises the boy misled,
In evil hour the' incautious sail he spread.
His vessel skimm'd the waves with rapid flight,
And reach'd the sacred isle in shades of night.
Medea waits alone, with mischief fraught,
Balm on her tongue, but murder in her thought.
Poor simple youth! he thinks, with childish art,
To wield her dark impracticable heart!
Vain thought! as soon, with feeble hand, the swain
The raging wintry torrent might restrain.
It scorns its banks, it deluges the ground;
It roars, it foams, and spreads destruction round.
Her airy fabric fancy joy'd to build,
And idle hope his witless bosom fill'd.
He dreams of aid his sister may afford,
And sees the Minyæ fall beneath his sword.
The wily sister these delusions fed;
In fraudful speech the stealthy moments fled;
While bland compliance smooth'd her oily tongue,
And present kindness pander'd future wrong.

Now Jason from his ambuscade advanc'd;
Rear'd o'er his head the shining falchion glanc'd.
Terrific form! abhorrent turn'd the maid,
And o'er her eyes her ample veil display'd,
With heart presageful of the' impending deed,
Nor fully steel'd to see a brother bleed.
As, in the precincts of some awful fane,
The victim ox, by sudden stroke, is slain,
The' insiduous Grecian aim'd a rapid blow,
And, gazing round him, fell'd the unguarded foe.
Ev'n at the threshold of the sacred door
He falls expiring on the marble floor,
Ev'n at the fane the natives of his land
Had rais'd for Artemis, with pious hand,
Sunk on his knees. As forth the life-blood gush'd,
O'er both his hands the purple torrent rush'd,
As in the mortal agonies he press'd
The ghastly wound that gap'd upon his breast.
Ev'n as his sister turn'd her head away,
Her head attire was dash'd with purple spray.
The darted rills that smok'd along the ground,
Bedew'd her snowy veil that floated round.
Power all-subduing, ever unsubdued,
With piercing glance oblique the fury view'd.
Of terrors queen, of ills and crimes the cause,
Ev'n she with horror mingled her applause.
The slayer took the first-fruits of the slain,
For mystic rites, that conscious fears ordain,
Atonements, that, in ancient days decreed,
Absolv'd the man of blood's atrocious deed.
Then from the wound the reeking skin he tore,
And suck'd with quivering lips the streaming gore.
Thrice from the panting breast he draws the blood;
Thrice from his teeth ejects the horrid flood.

Then, bath'd in streams yet welling from the wound,
He gave the lifeless body to the ground.
There, still entomb'd, his bones for ever sleep;
And still the stripling's name the natives keep.
Soon as the Greeks the glaring torch survey'd,
Appointed signal of the treacherous maid,
The reins to joy and martial thoughts they give,
And full against the Colchian vessel drive.
Then fall impetuous on the' astonish'd crew,
As pouncing hawks the timid doves subdue;
Or ravening lions, that in midnight hour,
To thin the fold with savage fury pour.
Fierce and destructive, the relentless train
Nor art eludes, nor courage can sustain.
Now here, now there they dart, with lightning's [force,
And all existence withers in their course.
Now Jason flies to share the warlike deed,
And yield that aid his comrades scarcely need.
One care alone the social band possess'd;
Doubts of his safety fill'd each thoughtful breast.
And now the' assembled chiefs in council sate,
The future voyage wakes the deep debate,
The princess on their consultations broke,
As Peleus thus among the leaders spoke:
'My counsel is, ere morn resumes the sky,
To man the vessel, and our oars to ply;
Mark where the foes attend in dread array,
And opposite direct your cautious way.
When morn shall come the past events to show,
Doubt and confusion will possess the foe;
'Reft of their leader 'mid the shades of night,
Nor scheme nor head combines them in the fight;
Dissension through their myriads shall prevail,
And unmolested leave our flying sail.'

His counsel pleas'd. The warriors spring from land,
The benches line, and row with vigorous hand.
Their toil with nerves unfailing they sustain'd,
And now Electris' hallow'd seat they gain'd,
Last in their progress of that island train,
Where Po descends to meet the briny main.
Emotions mingled of dismay and grief,
Possess'd the Colchians for their ravish'd chief.
Yet o'er the Chronian deep, with vengeful thought,
The Grecian vessel and her crew they sought.
In vain. The Argonauts were Juno's care;
To thwart their foes, terrific lightnings glare.
Final discomfiture, dispers'd they roam,
Impress'd with horror from their native home.
Æetes' cruelty such terror bred,
That wand'ring far to distant climes they fled.
Absyrtus' name some bid those isles retain,
That yielded refuge to the Grecian train;
Some raise the distant tow'rs, with exil'd hand,
Where Panyasis bathes the' Illyrian land;
And where a monument of ancient fame
With Cadmus[11] joins his lov'd Harmonia's name,
As denizens augment the' Enchelian race,
And lose the memory of their native place.
Scar'd by the thunders of almighty Jove,
Some to the high Ceraunian summits rove;
And still the name records the dread event,
Deriv'd from glancing fires through ether sent.
When now the voyage seem'd from perils freed,
The heroes through the watry vast proceed.

11 For the story of Cadmus and Harmonia, see notes at the end.

Hyllean seats the' adventurous band explore,
And bind their cables from the rocky shore.
Along the coast, where clustering islets rise,
Dangerous and difficult the channel lies.
No more the Minyæ from the natives find
Repulsive welcome, and unfriendly mind;
Bland they receive them, in their counsels share,
And means to prosecute their course prepare.
A fair donation their affections won,
A hallow'd tripod of Latona's son.
Erewhile, to Jason had the god of light
Two polish'd tripods given, of fabric bright;
When Pythos' shrine oracular he sought,
And the long voyage fill'd his anxious thought.
A mighty privilege the gifts endow'd,
By fate, in that auspicious hour, bestow'd,
To guard the land, where treasur'd they remain,
From wasting inroad of the hostile train.
Deep in the bosom of the peaceful ground,
Where fair Hylleis lifts her tow'rs renown'd,
The treasure lies conceal'd within the soil,
A depth inscrutable to human toil.
No longer flourishing in youthful bloom
The king they found; he slept within the tomb,
Young Hyllus. Him, on the Phæacian shore,
Fair Melita to strong Alcides bore.
For there a refuge in his youth he found,
When good Nausithous the sceptre own'd:
Press'd with a weight of guiltless blood he rang'd,
And soon for Macris this asylum chang'd.
Some expiation there he hop'd to find,
For conscious guilt lay heavy on his mind,
Since by their father's hand his infants bled,
In frantic mood, of melancholy fed.

Thee, nursing mother of the roseat god,
Thy viny plains the' illustrious wanderer trod.
There, beauteous daughter of the Ægean main,
Fair Melita renew'd his amorous pain;
She crown'd his love, and to the hero bore
The gallant Hyllus on that lonely shore.
High-minded youth, when manhood he attain'd,
The state subordinate his soul disdain'd.
He scorn'd the region where Nausithous sway'd,
And all his nod implicitly obey'd.
The native train he led, and wander'd wide,
O'er Chroniau waves with freedom for his guide.
Phæacia's king his aid and counsel gave;
And here he ceas'd his wandrings o'er the wave.
Not long he rested in the seats he chose;
With fierce Mentorians deadly war arose,
To guard the numerous herds and rustic band,
And Hyllus sunk beneath the spoiler's hand.

But sing, ye muses, how the' adventurous train,
Pass'd from that sea to reach the Ausonian plain.
Say, how to those Ligustic isles they came,
The Stœchades, so call their modern name.
Still do these regions true memorials hold,
Of wanderings wide, and navigation bold.
What ruling winds the destination gave,
On shores unknown to bid their ensigns wave?
Say, goddess, why that devious course they held;
What good allur'd, or what distress compell'd?

Father of justice, sire of gods and men,
Who marks our actions with all-seeing ken,
Jove, from on high, beheld Absyrtus bleed,
And doom'd to punishment that impious deed.
Peace or remission none for them remain'd;
Eternal wisdom this decree ordain'd,

That guiltless blood should agitate the band,
And vengeful furies hunt from land to land,
Till rites, which Circé might perform alone,
Should chase those horrors, and for guilt atone.
The doom mysterious not a chief could read,
For darkness veil'd what righteous Heav'n decreed.
And now they pass from that Hyllæan plain,
Where countless isles lay clust'ring in the main,
And those Liburnian seats in order trace,
Of old the mansions of a Colchian race,
Resounding Issa, with her rocky steep,
Fair Pityæa, smiling on the deep.
Still forward borne, they to Corcyra came,
Where amorous Neptune plac'd the beauteous dame,
Sprung from Asopus, nymph with golden hair;
From Phlius far he led Corcyra fair.
With forests clad the gloomy hills arise,
At distance blackening on the sailor's eyes.
And hence that isle is black Corcyra nam'd,
An epithet to mark the' appearance fram'd.
The winds propitious to their course prevail,
And Melita they pass with swelling sail,
The tall Cerossus, and with head more high,
Nymphæa proudly towering to the sky.
Daughter of Atlas, here amid the deeps
Her magic court the fair Calypso keeps.
Distant, half veil'd in clouds and vapours blue,
Ceraunia's doubtful hills they seem to view.
Then Juno read her consort's secret mind, [sign'd.
And schemes of vengeance 'gainst the Greeks de-
Hence, that the train lustrations might perform.
To thwart their course she sent the friendly storm;
They hurried retrograde with rapid flight;
Electris, rocky island, rose in sight.

Here, as the vessel plough'd the salt profound,
Sudden they heard a deep and awful sound.
With human speech endow'd, the groaning oak,
In hollow tones amid the timbers spoke,
Where plac'd by Pallas from Dodona's wood,
With vocal pow'rs, oracular it stood.
Amaze and horror fill'd the Greeks to hear
So strange a voice announcing words of fear.
'What dreadful tempests on your course await!
What endless wanderings by the doom of fate!
How long through pains and perils must ye rove!
Such the decree, and such the wrath of Jove!
Unless fair Circé shall remove the stain
Of blood, contracted from Absyrtus slain.
Yet more, the twins of Leda must repair
To win the favour of the gods by pray'r;
With gales propitious, that the ship may keep
Her steady course along the' Ausonian deep,
Till Circé's island cheer the longing sight,
Daughter of Perseus, and the god of light.'
Thus Argo spoke, as day began to close.
The sons of Tyndarus obedient rose.
The wishes of the Greeks their voice express'd,
Their lifted hands the heav'nly pow'rs address'd.
With downcast eyes the Minyæ stood around;
Their humbled spirits sunk in awe profound.
Their flying bark with swelling sails convey'd,
Within Eridanus was deep embay'd.
Where, blasted by the lightning's darted ray,
And rushing headlong from the car of day,
Young Phaëton, unfortunate as fair,
Expiring fell, and quench'd his flaming hair
Deep in the channel of the spreading stream;
The waters still emit a fiery steam,

As boiling from their lowest depth they swell,
Where pierc'd with fiery wounds the stripling fell.
There birds in vain their sounding pinions urge,
O'erpower'd they sink in that sulphureous surge.
The daughters of the sun, a mournful band,
Along the bank, enclos'd in poplars stand.
Still from their leaves resounds the voice of woe,
And still, for Phaëton, their sorrows flow;
Still sensible of grief their loss recal,
While drops of amber from their eyelids fall,
That bright and liquid, scatter'd o'er the land,
Consistence from the chymic sun demand.
When loud and shrill the wintry storms arise,
And bid the swelling stream his bank despise;
Gloomy and deep the Po inundates round,
His waters sweep the treasure from the ground,
In giddy whirlpools. But the Celtic race
To nobler origin that substance trace;
Ev'n to the tears by weeping Phebus shed,
In fond remembrance of his offspring dead.
For much he wept, with grief and anger fraught,
What time the Hyperborean race he sought;
Stung by reproaches from the sire of gods,
For earth he left the starry-pav'd abodes.
Sorrowing for him, in Lacerea fair,
Whom to the god divine Coronis[12] bare.
Where to the main bright Amyrus descends,
The pow'r that health to wretched mortals sends.
Such the tradition of the Celtic throng,
Preserv'd in fable, and rehears'd in song.

No gleam of pleasure cheer'd the conscious crew,
No sense of thirst, no care of food, they knew.

[12] Æsculapius.

All day they mourn'd, and languish'd; where prevail'd
Mephitic vapours, from the stream exhal'd,
That o'er the Po incessant baneful rise,
Since Phaëton fell flaming from the skies.
While gloom prevail'd, in accents sad and clear,
The mourning daughters of the sun they hear.
They wept their brother lost. The tears at morn,
Like drops of oil, were on the current borne.
Then the deep courses of the Rhone they gain,
Who, mix'd with Po, fraternal seeks the main.
Where steepy banks the narrow channel bound,
With bellowing voice the confluent waters sound,
From central depths, within the hollow ground,
The gates and resting place of night profound.
The Rhone, impetuous bursting, fiercely roars,
And hurls his raging stream on ocean's shores.
While here he hurries to the' Ionian main,
And there descends, Sardinian waves to gain.
Diffusive there seven ample mouths convey
His parted waters through the spacious bay.
Onward they pass, where spreading lakes [13] expand
Their squally shoals along the Celtic land.
Here dangers unforeseen the' adventurous wait,
A sunken rock lies fraught with sudden fate [14].
The Greeks unconscious near perdition drew,
And never had return'd that gallant crew;
Here Argo, though by hands divine compos'd,
Her course disastrous had for ever clos'd.
But Juno provident, from fields of air,
Survey'd their peril with parental care.
Descending on the' Hercynian mount she stood;
And loud recall'd them from the fatal flood.

[13] *Aliter*, marshes wide. [14] See note on this passage.

Aghast they stood, with fear and wonder fill'd;
Through air around the warning accents thrill'd.
Obedient then a backward course they trace,
Thro' the known channels of that dangerous place.
Before the voice precursive lightnings broke,
The sacred presence pealing thunders spoke.
Yet still those straits the lab'ring bark detain'd;
And ocean's sea-beat shore full late they gain'd.
While, by imperial Juno's counsel sway'd,
'Mid various nations of the Celts they stray'd.
Thus many a tribe of the Ligurian shore
Unheeding and unheeded they explore.
Still, as they pass, the guardian goddess shrouds
Their daring progress in a night of clouds.
The bark secure the midway channel keeps,
Incumbent on the noon while darkness sleeps;
And gains the Stœchades, while from above
Divine protection guards the twins of Jove.
And altars still preserve their ancient praise,
Where sacred rites are paid in these our days.
And, first in that eventful voyage, shown
Their saving aid to mariners is known.
To Heav'n exalted, by the will divine,
Propitious still to mariners they shine.
  The Minyæ reach'd Æthalia's sea-girt soil,
And bath'd their limbs subdued with ceaseless toil.
With pebbles on the shore that ready lay
They chaf'd the skin, and cleans'd the sweat away.
And still the spotted stones along the shore,
Confess the labours that the heroes bore.
And many a famous monument remains;
For still that isle their disks and arms retains;
And still a port, preserving Argus' name,
Records the memory of their ancient fame.

Borne on the swelling of the' Ausonian deep,
Full in their view the Tuscan shore they keep.
With rapid flight they reach the famous port,
Where skill'd in magic Circé held her court.
Beside the waves they found the heav'nly fair,
The braids adjusting of her radiant hair.
Appalling forms, in visions of the night,
Had fill'd her soul with wonder and affright.
Through all her chambers, and the courts below,
Redounding streams of blood appear'd to flow.
The treasures of her art, the mystic arms,
The hoarded armoury of drugs and charms,
That stranger guests subdued beneath her sway,
On these the flames devouring seem'd to prey.
Then o'er the fire she cast the' empurpled stream,
With hurried hands, and quench'd the trembling gleam:
Then seem'd her fears to cease. With early dawn,
Her steps were to the sea-beat margin drawn,
With pious rites, averting ill, to lave
Her hair and garments in the briny wave.
A train of beasts, not fierce, like those of chase,
Nor yet in form of godlike human race,
But something mingled between brute and man,
With action mild, beside the' enchantress ran;
As gentle sheep, in myriads, where he leads,
Attend the shepherd through the flowery meads.
Their forms were doubtful, as when teeming earth
On living things bestow'd primeval birth;
While she, great parent, moist and pliant lay,
As yet unharden'd by the stroke of day;
From vital principles of every kind,
Her first rude work she various limbs combin'd;

Ere nature's hand from time experience gain'd,
Decided figures genders ascertain'd.
In mute attention thus around their queen,
Discordant shapes, ambiguous kinds were seen.
Stupendous scene! the heroes stood amaz'd;
And speechless wonder on the' enchantress gaz'd.
Soon as her port and features struck their view,
The sister of the Colchian king they knew.
The nightly terror of her dream dispell'd,
Home from the beach her course the' enchantress held.
With soothing action and demeanour bland,
The train she beckon'd with deceitful hand.
But Jason at the shore his comrades stay'd,
Alone proceeding with the Colchian maid.
They follow'd Circé; and together trod
The path that tended to her proud abode.
On splendid seats the' enchantress bade them rest;
But doubt and anxious thoughts her soul possess'd.
Their steps unsounding through the palace pass'd,
The vestal hearth they sought with silent haste;
Then, motionless, with downcast eyes they sate,
As suits the humble suppliant's piteous state.
Stung with reproaches of the conscious mind,
Between her hands the maid her face inclin'd;
While leaning on the hilt with grief profound,
The youth infix'd his falchion on the ground;
Nor lifts to vengeful Heav'n his drooping eyes,
While gloomy thoughts for slain Absyrtus rise.
Fair Circé mark'd their deep desponding mood;
She recognis'd the fugitives from blood;
Rever'd the suppliant's right with pious awe;
And bow'd submiss to Jove's imperial law,
Who makes the suppliant his peculiar care,
And, ev'n in punishment, inclines to spare.

The' atoning sacrifices she began,
That stains of blood remove from wretched man;
For refuge when he flies to Vesta's shrine,
And seeks remission from the pow'rs divine.
High o'er their heads the little swine she held,
New from the dam, and paps with nurture swell'd.
She pierc'd his throat, and, cleansing blood with blood,
Her suppliants tinctur'd in the purple flood.
Then ceremonies fill'd the solemn hour,
To calm the wrath of every vengeful pow'r;
And lustral Jove was call'd, at whose command
Oblations pure absolve the slayer's hand.
This done, her train, full many a Naiad maid,
The' ablutions from the splendid dome convey'd.
Within, to sober vows and whisper'd pray'r,
That bid the furies drop the scourge, and spare,
The flame with salted cakes the' enchantress fed;
And sweet libations o'er that offering shed
Of mighty pow'r, to soothe the gliding dead;
Whether a stranger's death their hands embrued,
Or the dire stain from kindred blood accru'd.
The solemn expiations were complete.
She call'd each suppliant to the polish'd seat,
Full in her view, and near. The speech began,
'What climes they visited, what seas o'erran.
Say, graceful strangers, from what part of earth,
Ye claim protection at the sacred hearth?'
Still, with the memory of her dream possess'd,
Doubt and disquiet fill'd her anxious breast.
Fondly she listen'd, with attentive ear,
The native accents of that maid to hear.
Soon as Medea lifted from the ground
Those eyes that beam'd celestial glory round,

That liquid golden fire, effulgence bright,
Which marks the beauteous progeny of light.
The daughter of that tyrant stern and bold,
In Colchian speech a tale of sorrow told.
In tuneful sounds, her soothing words explain'd
The toils, the travels by the band sustain'd;
And how she fled her cruel father's wrath,
With Phryxus' offspring through the wat'ry path;
But some events her cautious tongue forbore;
Nor spoke Absyrtus welt'ring in his gore.
In vain. Her inmost bosom Circé read;
Yet tears of pity for her sufferings shed.
And thus she spake: 'Ah wretch, in evil hour,
Thy steps adventurous left the princely bow'r!
What saving hand thine anguish shall delay?
What force protect thee from a father's sway?
His rage untir'd will hunt thee o'er the flood;
And ev'n in Greece avenge thy brother's blood.
Great is thy guilt. Yet, since the suppliant's name,
And ties of kindred, my compassion claim;
From me, though merited, no mischief prove.
But hence I warn thee. From these walls remove.
Hence, with that stranger, 'mong whose followers
A father's curse and duty are thy scorn. [borne,
Hence with the partner of thy guilty choice;
No more assail me with that plaintive voice.
Thy presence here the sacred hearth profanes;
I shrink abhorrent from thy guilty stains.
I shun thy counsels, nor assist thy flight,
From fame, and every form of fair and right.'
She ceas'd. And, fill'd with grief, the royal maid
Before her eyes the shining veil display'd,
To hide her tears. Her frame with terror shook.
Her hand with gentle action Jason took,

And led her through the portal. Mighty woes,
In briny torrents, found a brief repose. [move;
Trembling she went. Thus from the doors they
Nor heedless was the' imperial wife of Jove.
Already by her faithful envoy shown,
Each circumstance was to the Goddess known.
Erewhile, observant of the Grecian train,
Fair Iris left the starry-pav'd domain.
For Juno sought to learn, with anxious care,
When to their bark the Minyæ should repair.
This trusty instrument of her desires
Again she calls; again her aid requires;
'Haste, nymph belov'd, my wishes to fulfil;
Toil is thy pleasure, when it works my will.
With rapid course on varied pinions sweep,
And summon Thetis from the briny deep.
Say, Juno seeks her aid. From thence repair,
Where Vulcan's forges cast a ruddy glare
Along the strand, and deaf'ning hammers sound
On massive anvils to the vast profound.
From labour let him cease, and still the blast,
Parent of fire, till Argo shall have pass'd.
Thence to the caves of Æolus repair,
Supreme o'er winds the progeny of air.
My wishes to the stormy pow'r explain.
Let peace and stillness through his empire reign,
No truant tempest issue from his caves;
Nor angry surges curl the sounding waves.
Let gentlest zephyrs o'er the billows smile,
And waft the heroes to Phæacia's isle.'
She ceas'd; the nymph her pinions light extends,
And swiftly through the fields of air descends.
Deep, deep she plung'd, beneath the' Ægean tides,
In regal state, where hoary Nereus bides.

To Thetis first was Juno's mandate giv'n;
And, urg'd by Iris, she repair'd to Heav'n.
Next the fair messenger to Vulcan came;
The bellows ceas'd to swell the roaring flame;
Attentive to his parent's high behest,
Through all his caves he bade the hammers rest.
Last the fam'd son of Hippotas[15] she finds,
Immortal ruler of the stormy winds.
To him her message, while the nymph address'd,
And, pausing, bade her weary pinions rest;
Fair Thetis left her sisters of the waves,
And ancient sire, within the coral caves;
And hasting to the blissful seats above,
Obedient sought the' imperial wife of Jove.
Her sovereign Juno at her right-hand plac'd,
And thus address'd, with fair reception grac'd.

'Now, lovely Thetis, with attention hear
The words I destine for thy private ear.
Thou know'st how much my cares for Jason wake,
And those brave spirits, who his toils partake.
Their vessel through the wandering isles I bore,
Where, charg'd with fire, tremendous tempests roar;
Where pointed rocks the savage shore defend,
And thundering waves the mortal barriers rend.
But, if aright I read the page of fate,
The' adventurous train yet greater dangers wait.
Full in their path the rocks of Scylla lie,
With dire Charybdis whirling to the sky.
Thee, from a child, I nurs'd with partial hand,
More priz'd, more lov'd, than all the sea-born band,
Since thy proud virtue scorn'd the vows of Jove,
That wanderer, ever prone to lawless love.

[15] Æolus.

Mortals, immortals, in promiscuous throngs;
With all alike the nuptial couch he wrongs.
Thy pious mind rever'd the wedded law,
And Juno's rights inspir'd a virtuous awe.
Hence, as thou know'st, his wrathful doom he bound,
By that dire oath the Stygian waves profound,
That never god, of all the' immortal train,
Should beauteous Thetis for his bride obtain.
Yet still resistance seem'd to fan the fire,
And still his glance betray'd unchaste desire.
Till Themis, venerable pow'r, reveal'd
The high decree, from eldest time conceal'd.
Perdition seek, let Thetis crown thy love,
Produce a son, the conqueror of Jove.
His passion then he curb'd with prudent fear,
Lest in his son he should a rival bear.
While I to recompense thy prudent mind,
The first of mortals for thy spouse assign'd.
To meet thy chaste desires with mutual flame,
And glad thee with a mother's tender name.
The gods I summon'd to the nuptial rite,
And I myself sustain'd the nuptial light,
Rejoic'd to give, in that auspicious hour,
Each mark of honour that my love could show'r.
Yet more, without disguise, I shall unfold
The destinies, by mystic fate enroll'd.
When thy lov'd son shall seek the' Elysian plains,
Whom Chiron now within his cave detains,
With gentle Naiads, who indulgent share
The wakeful duties of parental care.
There is he doom'd to wed the Colchian maid;
Thy future child demands thy present aid.
And Peleus too, I see thine anger flame;
But what existence is exempt from blame?

He may have erred, but powerful Até flies,
Ev'n through the blissful mansions of the skies.
Vulcan, I trust, will yield to my desires,
And hush through all his caves the raging fires.
While Æolus forbids the storm to sweep,
And only zephyrs wander o'er the deep.
Each element shall with propitious smile
Conspiring waft them to Phæacia's isle.
Thence I confide them to thy guardian care;
Their safe return thy counsels shall prepare.
Tremendous rocks the boding fears excite,
And mountain billows teem with wild affright.
Yet from these perils, with benignant hand,
Thou and thy sisters may protect the band.
Let them not drive incautious through the waves,
In greedy whirls, where dire Charybdis raves,
Wheel'd by devouring eddies round and round,
Absorb'd to perish in the salt profound.
Nor let them Scylla's dire recess attain,
The monstrous terror of the' Ausonian main.
Appalling offspring, she from Phorcys came,
And Hecatè, whom men Crataïs name,
Night-wandering power. Around her dogs of hell
The billows vex, with never-ceasing yell.
The choice of heroes be it thine to save,
From ravening jaws, that gape amid the wave.
Safe let their bark the course of peril run;
However near, destruction let them shun.'
Then Thetis answer'd: 'Let the tempests sleep,
And raging fires within their caverns keep;
No danger from devouring billows fear,
Through them the vessel I profess to bear.
Let gentle zephyrs o'er the deeps prevail,
And safe to Greece I speed their flying sail.

But distant seats the' occasion bids me trace;
To meet my sisters of the Nereid race,
And gain concurrence of their friendly pow'r,
No mean support in that laborious hour.
From thence with rapid flight I seek the land,
Where Jason's bark is anchor'd near the strand;
And urge the crew, when morn shall glad the sky,
To spread their sails, and o'er the billows fly.'
These accents ended, downward she repairs,
Through curling vapours and through eddying airs.
Her native realm, through azure waves profound,
She sought, and call'd the sister Nereids round.
When, crowding at the well-known voice, they came,
She spake the will of Heav'n's imperial dame.
Prompt, at her bidding, from their parent caves,
They throng'd obedient thro' the' Ausonian waves.
But Thetis, swifter than the lightning's gleam,
Or rapid progress of the solar beam,
That, parting from the morning's orient birth,
To western limits traverses the earth,
Full soon appear'd upon Æëa's strand,
Near the wide limits of the' Etrurian land.
The Grecian youths beside their bark she finds,
With disk and javelin they relax'd their minds.
Peleus, her spouse, was with the gallant crew;
She seiz'd his hand, and from the crowd withdrew.
To him alone his consort shone reveal'd;
A mist her beauties from the rest conceal'd.
'No more inactive on the shore remain;
With dawn returning plough the wat'ry plain:
So Juno wills, whose kind protecting pow'r
Wakes for your safety in the dang'rous hour.
She bids the' assembled Nereids of the tide
Your vessel through the wand'ring islets guide,

There lies the future voyage. But beware,
Lest thou my presence to thy friends declare;
When to thine aid, emergent from the main,
I join my sisters of the Nereid train.
Deep in thy bosom let this caution stay;
Nor wake my wrath, as on a former day;
Lest unextinguish'd hate my spirit keep,
And woes inflict, thy latest hours shall weep.'
She ceas'd; and, vanishing with rapid flight,
The caves of ocean snatch'd her from his sight.
The hero gaz'd with anguish and surprise.
Long had her charms been strangers to his eyes;
Enrag'd, for young Achilles, since she fled,
Forsook his mansion, and disclaim'd his bed.
O'er flaming lamps, amid the nightly gloom,
Her infant's mortal flesh she would consume,
Immortal being to the babe to give,
And bid him free from age and sickness live.
She pour'd upon his little limbs by day
Ambrosial streams, preventive of decay.
As starting from his couch, the' indignant sire
Beheld his darling panting in the fire;
Untaught to read the dictates of the sky,
Forward he rush'd with a tremendous cry.
The goddess heard, with rage and grief profound,
And cast her infant screaming to the ground.
Like fading airy visions, forth she pass'd,
With motion swifter than the northern blast;
And wrathful plung'd beneath the briny foam,
Divorc'd from Peleus, and estrang'd from home.
His soul with anguish fond remembrance fill'd,
Yet to the train he told what Thetis will'd.
Their sportive combats instant they forsook,
And o'er the grass a hasty banquet took;

Along the turf they rested through the night,
To Heav'n's high vault till morning shot her light.
Now rush the zephyrs forth with influence bland;
They man their bark, and hasten from the strand.
Their anchors from the briny deep they heave,
And fit their ship the wat'ry path to cleave.
They strain the rigging from the mast on high,
And spreading yards, to bid the canvass fly.
As gales propitious bade the vessel glide,
They soon a fair and florid isle descried.
There tuneful sirens, with mellifluous strain,
Allure the' unwary sailors to their bane.
Them the bright muse Terpsichorè of yore,
Seducers sweet, to Achelous bore.
Their charming songs thy daughter Ceres lov'd,
Ere Pluto from Ennæan fields remov'd;
When, wreathing chaplets with the virgin throng,
She join'd the dance, and shar'd the choral song.
Mix'd was their form, part shone with female grace,
And part bespoke them of the plumy race.
Their station on the lofty rock they keep,
Where cliffs projecting shade the glassy deep.
Far distant heard their songs insidious flow,
And bid the mariner his home forego.
Deceiv'd, enchanted, day succeeding day,
He pines, and wastes his idle life away.
And now, with soft and never-ceasing sound,
The sweet deluders pour'd their notes around.
Delighted and entranc'd, the Grecian band
Had cast their anchors on the fatal strand;
But soon the poet of celestial race[16],
Son of Æagrus, tuneful pride of Thrace,

[16] Orpheus.

Preventive melody, with heav'nly fire,
And flying fingers, touch'd the native lyre.
He swept, with mastery, the hurried sound,
And notes of manly music floated round.
Loud o'er the soft voluptuous strain it thrill'd,
And every ear the martial descant fill'd.
Before the zephyrs, as they shoot along,
Through gurgling waves, they lose the siren throng;
Less heard, and less, their voices melt away,
And, lost in undulating air, decay.
Yet, Butes, son of Teleon, heard the strain,
With sweet seduction, wafted o'er the main;
He only, leaning from the polish'd stern,
The words of smooth enchantment could discern.
Instant he plung'd amid the wat'ry roar,
Possess'd with hopes to gain the fatal shore.
There had he perish'd; but the queen of love
Beheld the youth, with pity, from above;
And safe to land restor'd him from the deep,
Where Lilybæum rears the' aërial steep.
Sorrowing the Grecian band their course pursue,
While in their path yet greater perils grew.
Here Scylla rose with dark and fearful head;
Loud bellowing there, Charybdis terror spread.
And while the Planctæ wander through the waves,
Against their sides the gushing billow raves.
'There, from the burning rocks the flames arise,
With smoke in columns tow'ring to the skies;
And, raging from the subterranean cells,
'The boiling deep the flame of Vulcan swells.
His anvils rested, but the furnace glow'd,
And, mix'd with sparks, redounding vapour flow'd.
The struggling sun diffus'd a feeble ray,
And pitchy clouds prevail'd upon the day.

Around the vessel now the Nereids throng,
And Thetis following urg'd the bark along.
The dangerous course thro' floating rocks to guide,
She grasp'd the rudder, and her force applied,
While winds propitious lent their airy wing.
Thus from the deep exulting dolphins spring;
Now in the van their beauteous forms appear;
And now they bend resplendent in the rear;
Now, parallel on either hand, they dart;
A prospect grateful to the sailor's heart;
Thus crowded round the ship the graceful band,
While Thetis steer'd her with unerring hand.
When to those wandering isles the vessel came,
Above her snowy knees each sea-born dame
With eager haste her floating garments drew,
Then, wide dispers'd, to share the labour flew.
On the sharp rocks, at intervals, they stood,
Where billows broke incessant from the flood;
And as they rush'd infuriate on the shore,
The foamy swell aloft the vessel bore.
Now airy light the nymphs to Heav'n ascend;
Now with the wave to blackest depths descend.
As when, upon the hard and yellow sands,
With garb succinct, the sportive virgin bands
From hand to hand the gay contention ply,
And urge the ball quick circling through the sky,
Alternate caught amid the sportive crowd,
Alternate lost amid the fleeting cloud,
Earth still it shuns; the Nereids thus sustain
The flying ship alternate through the main,
High on the billow's back; while dashing round,
Through pointed breakers roar'd the salt profound.
Their labours Vulcan, sov'reign of the fires,
From the smooth promontory's top admires,

His hammer propp'd his shoulder as he stood,
And wondering gaz'd that animated flood.
From starry seats the' imperial bride of Jove
Mark'd how the vessel with the billows strove.
Possess'd and palpitating with alarms,
She clasp'd Minerva in her trembling arms.
Around that vessel such was the delay,
As fill'd the compass of a summer's day;
Ere freed from rocks the nymphs a passage gave,
To feel the favouring breeze, and skim the wave.
With gladden'd hearts the sailors forward run,
And pass Trinacria[17], favour'd by the sun.
Her flowery meads that happy land displays;
Untroubled there the flocks of Phebus graze.
The task of Juno done, the flitting train,
Like birds aquatic, div'd beneath the main.
The Greeks the bleat of sheep unnumber'd hear,
And low of oxen vibrates on their ear.
The sheep, on grass with spangled dew bespread,
Sol's youngest daughter Phaethusa fed.
With mildest rule her subject flock she sway'd;
A silver crook her lovely hand display'd.
A staff of shining brass Lampetia held,
And o'er the meads the lowing herd impell'd.
The flocks and herds were white as drifted snow,
And fed where springs the pastures moist o'erflow.
No dusky stain was through the number found,
And horns of gold their heads resplendent crown'd.
These meads they coasted with diurnal light,
Then pass'd a deep and spacious bay by night.
Through shades rejoicing they pursued their way,
Till morning hail'd them with returning day.

[17] Sicily.

Beyond the' Ionian bay an island lies,
In wealth abounding, and of ample size;
With spacious harbours bless'd, Ceraunia nam'd,
From elder time in storied legend fam'd.
And here 'tis fabled (heav'nly muse forgive;
I bid the tale with voice reluctant live)
Beneath the sickle lies, with horrid deed,
Distain'd, when Saturn doom'd his sire to bleed.
As others sing, this implement, of yore,
The bounteous Ceres to the harvest bore.
For well the goddess lov'd the' exuberant soil,
And taught the Titans there the reaper's toil.
Such love she bore to Macris, after styl'd
Fair Drepané, nurse of Phæacians mild.
Hither, through perils of the wave and land,
The Minyæ pass'd, from fair Trinacria's strand.
With fair reception, and a bounteous heart,
The king and people social rites impart.
With joy Alcinous and the city came,
That seem'd a tribute to the kindred claim.
The jocund train while festive rites employ,
The brave adventurers share the common joy.
An inborn transport fill'd the' exulting train,
As though ev'n now they trod Thessalia's plain.
Delusive joy! ordain'd by hostile fate,
Them fierce alarms from Colchian myriads wait.
With thirst of vengeance from the Pontus fraught,
Along the shores the Grecian band they sought.
Through the Cyanean rocks their squadrons came,
And every bosom rag'd with hostile flame.
They claim to bear away the Colchian maid,
And no pretence may this demand evade.
These terms rejected, to maintain their right
They menace fierce interminable fight;

Both there, on land, and after on the main,
With proud Æetes and his naval train.
But king Alcinous stay'd the rising war,
Pleas'd to remove the flames of strife afar.
With apprehensions dire the virgin fraught,
By turns the valiant friends of Jason sought.
Then near Phæacia's queen Arete stands,
And humbly clasps her knees with suppliant hands.
'With pity, queen, behold a wretched maid;
With generous hand extend thy timely aid.
Shall yon barbarians sate their fell desire,
To bear a victim to her vengeful sire.
By womanhood I urge thee, royal fair;
Nor let her failings mar the suppliant's pray'r.
Let not my faults that gentle bosom steel;
Mortal thyself, for human errors feel.
Most prone to faults is woman's wand'ring sense:
True, I have erred; but venial my offence.
This orb of day, with courage, I attest,
No fires unchaste pollute my youthful breast.
Be witness, Hecaté, tremendous pow'r,
Ador'd in orgics of the midnight hour.
No wish unhallow'd, no licentious thought
My desperate steps to follow strangers brought;
But urgent fear, and conscience of a crime
Drove me, a wanderer, from my native clime.
'Tis with reluctance being we resign,
And flight to save it, sole resource, was mine.
Yet still untouch'd, as in my native bow'r,
Still unpolluted to the present hour,
Such heav'nly pow'rs o'eraw'd the loose and bold,
The dearest treasure of our sex I hold.
O queen rever'd, thy royal husband bend,
With generous hand, a maiden to defend.

So may the' immortals grant thee length of days,
A numerous offspring, and unenvied praise!
So may thy states possess renown and health,
Peace unmolested, and increasing wealth!'
The virgin thus Phæacia's queen address'd;
And thus essay'd to melt each leader's breast:
'O noble chiefs, your labours cost me dear,
Since all these sorrows for your sake I bear.
O think, whose aid the fiery bulls subdued,
And taught by whom, you quell'd that earth-born brood!
Think, who restores you to your native skies,
To glad Hæmoniæ, with the golden prize.
A wretched outcast, for your sakes I roam,
Depriv'd of parents, friends, and native home.
For you, relinquish all that life endears,
The mark of obloquy, the slave of fears.
I suffer, that to you I may restore
Friends, parents, homesteads, the paternal shore.
Oh, with what mingled pleasure and surprise
Your welcome forms will glad the kindred eyes!
While Heav'n has snatch'd away my crown of fame,
On strangers cast a burden and a shame.
And shall not, then, the solemn compact bind?
Shall awful oaths be scatter'd to the wind?
Think on the furies to the suppliant giv'n,
And dread the future punishment from Heav'n.
With pity think, how dire shall be my fate,
Return'd the victim of parental hate.
What scorns, what tortures must the wretch sustain,
Whose only crime was kindness to your train!
To 'scape the doom for me remains no path;
No tow'r, no temple guards me from his wrath.

To you alone, sole tow'r of hope, I fly;
And cruel you the promis'd aid deny.
No soft compunctions a reception find;
No sense of shame can touch the harden'd mind.
A princess, trusting to your vows, is seen
An abject suppliant of a foreign queen.
When first the golden fleece appear'd in sight,
Proud were your spirits, dauntless was your might.
You were not slow the battle then to wage;
Nor fear'd Æëtes dreadful in his rage;
But terrors now subdue the manly heart,
When of those Colchians you but find a part.'
  Each valiant chief as plaintive she essay'd,
He turn'd to comfort the desponding maid;
The brandish'd jav'lin lighten'd in her view,
And each the falchion from the scabbard drew.
'O virgin! with their lives, this faithful throng
Shall ever guard thee from disgrace and wrong.'
  Amidst the troubles of the weary crew
The peaceful night diffus'd her balmy dew;
Night, that her mantle spreads on every soil,
And rest to mortals brings, and mortal toil.
But far her blessings from that virgin's breast,
And anxious sorrow robb'd her soul of rest.
As when, by night, the widow'd mother plies
The' unceasing distaff, 'mid her children's cries,
Oft for their sire they call, and oft for bread,
Her grief redoubling for a husband dead.
As gloomy prospects agonize her soul,
Down her pale cheek the silent sorrows roll;
Thus flow'd Medea's tears, like drops of rain,
Thus was her heart transfix'd with amorous pain.
  Meantime, Alcinous and his consort fair
Revolv'd the virgin's fate, with anxious care.

The nightly couch together as they press'd
The gentle queen her husband thus address'd :—
'O spouse belov'd, wilt thou not lend thine aid,
And from the Colchians guard this wretched maid?
That with the Minyæ favour we may find,
And fill our neighbours with a grateful mind.
For near is Argos to Phæacia's strand,
And near the natives of Hæmonia's land.
No neighbourhood with us the Colchians claim;
Known but by rumour is their monarch's name.
A weight of sufferings has that virgin prov'd;
And much her fears my yielding soul have mov'd.
Let not these strangers thy kind heart engage,
To give the mourner to her father's rage.
True she offended. Her unfilial hand
Imparted drugs, and charms, of influence bland.
She led the bulls, exhaling fire and smoke,
With passive necks, obedient to the yoke.
But one false step must from another spring;
And error in his train will error bring.
From cruel outrage of a father's hand,
She fled incautious with the stranger band.
But Jason, I am told, with solemn vows
Is bound, to make the maid his youthful spouse.
And would my love his virtuous aim control?
Or seek with perjury to load his soul?
Say, would thy gentle heart a maid return,
To furious parents, who for vengeance burn?
The fair Antiope recorded lives,
And warnings dire of rage paternal gives.
'Tis well remember'd, in the times of yore,
What sufferings Danae through the billows bore.
From an injurious sire, in this our time,
What deeds of horror stain a neighb'ring clime!

How Echetus, the scourge of human kind,
Pursued his daughter with infuriate mind.
He doom'd the maid to pine in cheerless night,
And pierc'd with pointed brass the balls of sight.
Deep in a cell, to servile labour doom'd,
She pines, in darkness and despair consum'd.'
Thus she. Her husband felt the soft control;
And kind expressions spake the melting soul.
'To glad my guests, and guard the virgin's charms,
Arete, I would meet the Colchian arms;
But Jove, all-seeing Jove, my spirit awes,
And much I fear to violate his laws.
Nor hold Æetes object of disdain;
His pow'r is great, and wide extends his reign.
Enrag'd, no monarch were a fiercer foe,
And Greece, though distant, might his vengeance know.
I will not veil my purpose from thy love,
And men, I trust, the sentence will approve.
If virgin yet remains the Colchian fair,
To yield her to her father I prepare;
But, if already she is Jason's bride,
The wife I tear not from her husband's side;
Nor yield to foes, to cruelty, and scorn,
The tender progeny, as yet unborn.'
He ceas'd; and sunk to calm repose consign'd.
His sayings deeply touch'd Arete's mind.
Her couch she leaves, and through the palace goes;
Attendant on the queen her women rose.
The herald, at her secret call, appears,
And crafty counsel to the Minyæ bears.
'The maid let Jason wed with urgent haste;
No more entreaties on Alcinous waste;
For vain and idle are your tears and pray'rs,
To change the purpose that his voice declares.

If virgin yet the Colchian fair remains,
Home he returns her to her native plains.
The nuptial yoke if now the princess bears,
His soul the laws of wedded love reveres.'
The' attentive herald pass'd without delay,
To Jason's ear the mandate to convey,
Both what his queen suggests with warning kind,
And what the purpose of Alcinous' mind.
The bay of Hyllus the fair city crown'd;
Wakeful in arms the warriors there he found.
Beside their vessel, as he greets the band,
In words succinct he speaks the queen's command.
The heroes all receiv'd, with pleasure fraught,
Words thus according with each inward thought.
All to the' immortal gods their goblets crown'd,
And pour'd the pure libation on the ground.
They led the victims for the hallow'd rite,
And spread the genial couch that very night.
Sacred recess, a fair and spacious cave
Commodious chamber for the nuptials gave.
Exulting, they prepare the bridal bed,
Her days, of old, where beauteous Macris led.
From gentle Aristæus sprang the fair,
Who made the' industrious bee his fav'rite care,
And first from olives, with laborious hand,
In balmy rills express'd the sweetness bland.
She, in Abantis first, Euboic soil,
For that fair child essay'd the nurse's toil,
Nyscian Bacchus, son of Jove; and press'd
The florid infant to her snowy breast.
From flames when Hermes bore him to the maid,
O'er his parch'd little lips she honey laid.
Her tender cares the queen of Jove beheld;
And, fill'd with anger, from that isle expell'd.

She sought far distant the Phæacian cave,
And wealth exuberant to the natives gave.
'Twas here the nuptial bed, capacious, plac'd,
Shone, with the fleece, resplendent covering, grac'd,
Illustrious trophy, that renown supplied
To youthful Jason and his royal bride.
In their white bosoms, from the fragrant bow'rs,
The village maidens bore the fairest flow'rs;
With bounteous hands they strew'd them o'er the ground,
While beamy splendours darted all around.
So shone the precious fleece, like radiant fire,
To light the lover to his fond desire;
The lovely rustics gaz'd with glad surprise,
And secret wishes lighten'd in their eyes;
Yet fear and modesty forbade the band
To touch the treasure with inquiring hand.
From various seats they came, of various line;
Some daughters of Ægeus, stream divine;
In uplands some of Meleteius bide;
Some cultivate the plains and meadows wide.
Impell'd by Juno, from each native bow'r,
They throng'd to honour Jason's nuptial hour.
Still, in memorial of that night, the cave
Retains the name Medea's nuptials gave.
'Twas here entranc'd the youthful pair were laid,
And fragrant veils around them were display'd.
Without, the heroes shook the warlike spear,
Lest foes, with sudden onset, should appear.
With green and leafy boughs their heads were crown'd,
While Orpheus bade the tuneful lyre resound.
Before the bridal bow'r, the festive throng
In cadence chanted hymeneal song.

Yet different far did this event proceed,
From what the son of Æson had decreed.
His thoughts had destin'd, not Phæacia's reign,
Scene of his nuptials, but the native plain;
When, anchor'd in Iolcos' welcome port,
His gladden'd eyes should hail his father's court.
There too in fancy was Medea led,
To rest her hopes, and deck the bridal bed.
In vain the feeble race of hapless man
Their airy schemes of perfect bliss may plan.
Unknown, alas! is happiness sincere;
When joy we taste, some anguish still is near.
Thus love's delights were poison'd by dismay,
And doubts what purpose might Alcinous sway.
The morn returning with immortal light,
Through ether chas'd the gloomy shades of night.
Her radiance gilt the smiling shores around,
And gems of dawning twinkled o'er the ground.
A busy hum in every street was heard;
The face of labour through the town appear'd:
Meantime, the Colchian armament from far
Around the point of Macris mov'd to war.
The just Alcinous, by his compact sway'd,
Came forth to judgment on the royal maid.
Of purest gold the sceptre he sustain'd,
Symbol that many a righteous doom ordain'd.
Behind, in armour formidably gay,
Phæacian cohorts pass'd in deep array.
The crowding consorts of the gallant band,
Without the gates to view the pageant stand.
A train of rustics from their labour came;
For Juno round diffus'd the' unerring fame.
A lamb, the fairest of the flock, they brought,
And heifer, yet to bear the yoke untaught;

For due libations at the sacred shrine,
While others vases bore of sparkling wine.
The smoke arose in wreaths from sacred flames,
And bridal gifts were giv'n by fairest dames;
Such female works as women wont to give,
And fond of splendour gladly will receive;
Embroider'd veils, and gems, and golden toys,
That friendship pours on recent nuptial joys.
The assembled throng, with fond amazement, view
The forms and features of the godlike crew:
And oft the Thracian bard, to charm the crowd,
Swept from his lyre a descant sweetly loud;
And soft and light, with evanescent sound,
His studded sandal nimbly beat the ground.
Nor heedless were the jocund virgin train,
Of love and love's delights. They added strain
Symphonious—hymeneal sweet—and sang—
That all the plain with charming carrols rang.
Now sole they sang; now circling they advance,
And voice melodious join with choral dance,
As Juno taught. She too the queen inclin'd,
To publish what her virtuous lord design'd,
Most upright doom. Complete to her desire
All rites were done that nuptial laws require.
Firm is the king to guard the wedded pair;
No selfish motives his resolves impair.
Threats of Æetes and the Colchian band
Nor move his spirits, nor unnerve his hand;
Determin'd firm remains the pious mind;
For sacred oaths and solemn compacts bind.
When now the leaders of the Colchian host
Perceiv'd the purpose of their mission lost,
And found him bent his honour to maintain,
And chase their navy from his ports and reign,

They fear'd the disappointed tyrant's wrath,
And shrunk abhorrent from the homeward path.
Humbly they seek protection in that isle
Where equal laws prevail, and peaceful blessings
The happiness of quiet rule they felt, [smile.
And long the settlers in Phæacia dwelt:
A race, that origin from Bacchus claim,
From Ephyræ, their native isthmus, came;
In after times the peaceful mansions held,
And from their seats the colonists expell'd.
A neighbouring isle the banish'd Colchians gain'd,
Ere on the continent they seats obtain'd.
Their place of rest Ceraunian hills they chose,
Where ancient dwellings of the' Abantes rose.
There, taking root and spreading o'er the ground,
Nestæan seats and Oricos they found.
Time, in his progress, these events survey'd,
And yearly still the solemn rites are paid;
Still are the fates, and still the nymphs rever'd,
Around an altar by Medea rear'd.
Where Nomian Phœbus fills his awful shrine,
Author of just decrees, and source of light divine.
And now, Alcinous to the parting band
The gifts of friendship gave with liberal hand:
And equal bounty mark'd the royal fair,
Her husband's feelings ever wont to share.
With soul compassionate, and thoughtful heed,
Of what a female's tenderness may need,
Twelve maids of her domestic train she gave,
To wait Medea o'er the distant wave:
Six days elaps'd, the morn succeeding bore
The godlike heroes from Corcyra's shore;
The wind propitious through their canvass sings,
And speeds the vessel with his airy wings.

Nor yet did fates allow that toil-worn train
Thrice welcome Greece and native strands to gain;
That first of blessings ere the wanderers boast,
Much must be suffer'd on the Lybian coast.
With swelling sails Ambracia's gulf they fled,
And hallow'd seats where infant Jove was fed;
Then, through the' Echinades their course they found,
The dangerous strait where rocky islets bound.
Full in their view the land of Pelops lay,
When northern blasts arose with furious sway.
Nine dreadful nights the storm incessant roars;
As many days it rends the Lybian shores.
The driving winds the helm, the pilot scorn,
Near the fell Syrtes was the vessel borne;
There shifting sands the lab'ring bark embay;
Thence never crew pursued the homeward way.
An hideous tract the slimy marshes spread;
The putrid waves are motionless and dead.
A treacherous depth of seeming land is seen,
Devouring water cloth'd in fraudful green;
Along the brine a spume corrupted lies,
And pestilential vapours load the skies.
Inhospitable rise the sandy heaps,
No bird has dwelling there, no thing that creeps.
The winds conspiring with the refluent surge,
On these unhappy shoals the vessel urge;
Where tides resistless, with alternate roar,
Now to the main return, now break upon the shore.
Part of the keel within the wave remain'd,
The greater portion now the land sustain'd;
The heroes sprang to shore, and grief profound
Possess'd each heart, to view the prospect round.

The' expansive skies, a cheerless blank and drear,
And tracts of sand to meet the skies appear,
Unvaried barrenness; no springs arise,
No path, no haunt of shepherds glads their eyes.
Nor tree nor herb was scatter'd o'er the plain,
And mournful silence spoke it famine's reign.
Each turn'd with sad surprise and heartfelt groans,
And ask'd his comrade in desponding tones—
'What land is this? oh, whither has the storm
Driven us to perish, in some horrid form?
Better the dangers known again to brave,
Through clashing rocks, that float amid the wave;
To thwart the' Almighty's will, to brave his hate,
Heroic daring would adorn our fate;
But now what hope, or what resource remains?
Confin'd by storms on these deserted plains,
Soon shall our little span of life be pass'd,
Despair unmingled reigns along the waste;
No means of life the burning sand supplies,
All nature sickens, vegetation flies.'
Such sounds the phrensy of despair confess'd,
The sad Ancæus thus the train address'd,
Skilful to guide the helm: ''Tis true, my friends,
A dreadful doom o'er every head impends.
In solitudes accurs'd we must endure
Unutterable ills, without a cure;
If from the land the changing winds should blow,
And bear the waters back with refluent flow.
Far as these eyes the dismal view command,
Where turbid waves are mix'd with treacherous sand,
With dashing foam the' extended beach is hoar,
And billows break continuous on the shore.
The sacred ship our hope, our chiefest pride,
To fragments torn ev'n now were scatter'd wide;

Did not the swellings of the salt profound
Forbid her keel to strike the fatal ground.
But now, with rapid ebb returns the tide,
The sinking shoals the bottom scarcely hide;
Then pools innavigable round us spread,
And hopes of safety all are cold and dead.
Assume the helm some more experienc'd hand,
Give if thou canst salvation to this band.
Ah no! the day of our return is gone,
For ever fled. Our hopes and fears are done.
Soon shall we reap the fruit of perils pass'd;
By Jove decreed to perish in this waste.'

With tears he ceas'd. A like despondence fill'd
All who were best in guiding vessels skill'd.
Then, every heart a mortal terror froze;
On every cheek a death-like pale arose.
As when some tidings strange and dire prevail,
Men crowd the streets like sheeted spectres pale;
When tales of war and pestilence they hear,
Or future famine wakes presageful fear,
As inundation deluging the plain
Devours the labours of the' industrious swain;
When from the statue bloody dews distil,
Or sacred shrines tremendous bellowings fill;
When dim eclipse o'erpow'rs the noontide glare,
And glancing meteors fill the troubled air;
With pensive steps, a wan desponding train,
The heroes stalk'd beside the' extended main.

And now came on the sombrous ev'ning's close,
Clad in a colour suited to their woes.
With bursting tears they clasp'd each other's hand,
Tears sole indulgence of the wretched band;
Then parting, each pursues the sad relief,
And broods insatiate o'er the lonely grief.

Each far from other took his gloomy way,
And stretch'd unsocial on the sands they lay,
As chance or choice the couch of sorrow found,
And mantles wrapp'd their drooping heads around.
They mourn'd, of food regardless, through the night,
No care of food return'd with morning light;
Such forms of horrid death were round display'd,
Such dire forebodings every heart dismay'd.
Apart the maids, that from Phæacia came,
With cries assembled round the Colchian dame.
As when the parent bird in quest of food,
Compell'd by hunger, leaves the callow brood,
Unfit to tempt the sky, an hapless flock
Within the cleft of some aspiring rock;
Abandon'd thus, if from the nest they fall,
In vain for help the piteous nurslings call;
As where the swelling bank with verdant brow
Sees the rich streams of bright Pactolus flow,
The plaintive cygnets raise the doleful strain,
The borders far resound, the dewy plain,
The silver currents, mourn'd these virgins fair,
And mingled with the dust their golden hair.
All night their wailings rose most sadly sweet,
And lonely echo lov'd their voices to repeat.
Unknown, unhonour'd by the race of man,
Their names extinguish'd with their glorious plan,
The first, the noblest of the Grecian host
In deserts wild their gallant lives had lost.
But thoughts of pity to the suffering band
The heroines felt who sway'd the Lybian land;
When from her father's head in shining arms,
Severely bright, mature in virgin charms,
Minerva rose; their early cares they gave,
Her beauteous frame in Triton's lake to lave.

Thus had the nymphs the love of Pallas gain'd,
And sacred honours o'er that realm obtain'd.
'Twas noon. The sun his keenest arrows cast,
Reflected fierce from all the burning waste.
Their steps divine the nymphs to Jason guide,
From his fair head they gently drew aside
The shading veil. Awe-struck the youth declin'd,
From glories that bespake the heav'nly kind,
His reverent eyes. The mourner they address'd,
And sooth'd with kindness the desponding breast.
'Why sink, sad youth, abandon'd to despair?
Know, that immortals make thy fate their care;
Thy fortunes pass'd are not to us untold,
Thy toils, thy wanderings, for the fleece of gold.
We know thy sufferings o'er the wave and land;
We know the' achievements of thy daring band.
Nymphs of the fleecy care and rustic train,
We hold an humble and a local reign,
Pleas'd with the worship of our native soil,
The simple guardians of the shepherd's toil.
Rouse like a man from this despair profound,
And raise thy friends, that languish on the ground.
When Amphitrité shall unyoke the car
That whirls her Neptune o'er the deeps afar,
Their tender parent let the train repay,
With due returns, for many an anxious day;
For painful throes and agonizing care,
Since first their manly forms her womb parental bare;
Then safely to the lov'd Achæan shore
Bear the rich fleece that shines with golden ore.'
The nymphs evanish'd like an airy dream;
Yet still their accents sound, and near they seem.
As on that barren plain he sate half-rais'd,
Around in wonderment the hero gaz'd.

'Nymphs, honour'd nymphs, ye guardians of this wild,
Oh hear your suppliant with indulgence mild!
Sustain his spirit in this hour of fear,
And safe through perils of these regions bear.
But dark the words that speak of our return;
Perplex'd with doubts my veering thoughts are borne;
United minds the' abyss of fate may sound,
Wherefore delay to call my friends around?'
He rose impetuous from the sandy bed,
Parch'd with the sun, with squalid dust o'erspread.
Forward he rush'd, and loudly call'd the train.
His voice resounded to the distant plain.
Thus in the wilds, that long have nurs'd his race,
The tawny lion, dusty from the chase,
Stalks through the forest with a fiery glare,
And roaring seeks the partner of his lare,
Tremendous call! among the mountains shake,
At his dire voice, the glens and tangled brake.
His roar the startling herds with terror fills,
His roar the guardian swains with horror thrills;
So loud were Jason's shouts. But, to the heart
Congenial, no dismay the sounds impart.
The heroes all assembled at his cries;
With sadden'd minds they came, and downcast eyes.
Where, stationed mid the shoals and dangerous sand,
Their vessel lay, they stood a gloomy band;
At Jason's mandate with the female train
Promiscuous join'd, they sate beside the main.
'Hear, lov'd companions, while my words unfold
The tidings heavenly messengers have told;
Late as I lay, the victim of despair,
Three nymphs beside me stood, divinely fair.

No mortals they in skins of goats array'd,
With rustic cinctures of the shepherd maid,
Their simple vests from necks of ivory hung,
And graceful round their slender middles clung.
Awhile they stood above my drooping head,
And drew the veil that o'er my face lay spread.
With cheering words they rous'd me from the ground.
They bade me summon you, my comrades, round;
And to your mother gratefully restore
Due recompense for all the pangs she bore;
For wakeful cares, and many an anxious day,
While yet unconscious in her womb we lay;
When Amphitrité shall unyoke the car,
That whirls her Neptune o'er the deeps afar.
With thoughts perplex'd, in vain my troubled mind
The purport of their accents toils to find.
Celestial heroines so they spake their strain,
Daughters of Lybia, guardians of the plain,
Our wanderings past, our various toils they knew,
By means superior open'd to their view.
They ended; and, in mist or cloud conceal'd.
No more the heav'nly vision shone reveal'd.'
His words the crowd with silent wonder hear,
While motives mix'd of joy and grief appear.
What tongue can paint the' amazement of the band!
A mighty courser sprang from sea to land!
He sought the plain. The locks redoubled deck,
On either side, his proud and arching neck.
Golden his mane, he toss'd his head on high,
And flakes of splendour lighten'd to the sky.
From his sleek sides he dash'd the briny foam,
Then stretch'd with zephyrs in his limbs to roam.

This Peleus marking with elated breast,
And words of hope, the' assembled train address'd:
'Now, now, my friends, has Neptune's lovely bride
Unyok'd the car that whirls him o'er the tide.
Now is the time. Nor can my thoughtful mind
In those dark sayings other parent find,
Than the fair vessel in whose womb we pass'd,
With safety borne through many a wat'ry waste;
For toils and perils she for us endur'd,
Our lives and safety have her groans procur'd.
Let pious shoulders then sustain the weight,
With nerves untir'd, of this maternal freight:
And with the burden o'er the sands proceed,
Where the swift courser shall direct his speed;
Observe his track along this arid ground;
For sure he will not plunge in earth profound.
If hope mislead not, we shall thus explore
Some welcome harbour, some propitious shore.'
He ceas'd. The comment pleas'd the gen'ral throng,
So has the Muse recorded in her song;
And I but follow, with submissive tread,
An humble votary, where the Muses lead.
Their breath alone awakes poetic fire;
Their words alone are suited to my lyre.
And thus they sang:—
'O first of regal line,
Endow'd with virtues, and with strength divine,
Whose vast exertions could the ship sustain,
With all her loading o'er the desert plain.
Twelve times did Phebus measure day and night,
While thus ye bare her with unwearied might.
What pangs, what miseries those heroes wrung;
The tale of sufferance mocks the pow'r of tongue.

O truly glorious was that godlike breed!
Their acts declare them of immortal seed.'
Thus, by the dire necessity compell'd,
Their painful march the band of heroes held.
Onward they mov'd, till, source of glad surprise,
The lake of Pallas open'd to their eyes.
Here first they paus'd, with toil and heat oppress'd,
Here first they bade their burden'd shoulders rest;
Like famish'd dogs that prowl abroad for food,
Dispers'd they flew to seek some spring or flood.
For burning thirst the fainting train assail'd,
And pain and misery o'er the mind prevail'd;
Nor vainly sought. They found in flowery prime
A sacred plain; where to that instant time,
The serpent Ladon, with unwearied care,
Was wont to guard the golden apples fair.
The parent stem, where fruits immortal crown'd,
The soil, the garden mighty Atlas own'd;
And there Hesperian maids, with sweetest song,
The gentle monster fed, the fruits and flow'rs among.
Beside that tree, the region's boast and pride,
Slain by Alcides, late the guardian died.
The tail yet seem'd some feeling to betray,
The trunk above all cold and lifeless lay;
The shafts unerring by the hero sent,
In many a wound the gaping skin had rent,
With active venom ting'd of Lerna's brood;
The bane return'd, commix'd with putrid blood.
In swarms the greedy flies assembled round;
And drain'd the bile and gore from every wound.
Near him, those tuneful nymphs, with streaming eyes,
Their servant mourn'd with loud and piercing cries,
High o'er their heads they raise the taper hand,
And o'er their faces snowy veils expand,

And o'er their golden locks. The youths drew near,
Precipitate. Possess'd with sudden fear,
The bashful nymphs dissolving from the view,
In dust and earth from mortal sense withdrew.
The bard of Thrace that prodigy explor'd,
And thus with prayer the deities ador'd:
'Nymphs, gentle nymphs, benevolent as fair,
With influence high, who make these fields your care;
Whether you join the radiant throngs above,
Or pow'rs terrestrial here delight to rove,
Or guardian maids of lawn and meadow wide,
O'er artless shepherds and their flocks preside,
With forms benignant glad our longing eyes;
Nymphs, sacred nymphs, old Ocean's daughters, rise.
Some rock disclose, where gushing springs have birth,
Some sacred fountain bubbling cool from earth,
That, temper'd with the sun's translucent ray,
May feverish pangs of ardent thirst allay!
And, if our bark may gain Achaia's coast,
The richest gifts that deities can boast,
The sweetest perfumes that to heav'n ascend,
To crown your rites, and glad your shrine, attend.'
Fervent he pray'd; and unperceiv'd, though near,
His fervent pray'r the' Hesperian virgins hear.
The suffering band they view'd, and felt their grief;
And soon compassion sent the wish'd relief.
They bade the teeming soil its wealth disclose,
And first a spring of tender grass arose;
Then the long shoots of various herbs appear'd,
And quickly trees their taper forms uprear'd;
A shady elm fair Erytheis spread,
And Hespera sustain'd a poplar's head;

A sacred osier beauteous Æglè stood,
With branches ever bent to taste the flood.
Emergent then from trees, a portent strange,
The nymphs their forms assum'd with sudden change.
The fairest Æglè then, in gentlest words,
Replied, and with their pray'r her speech accords.
'Great is the' advantage that your weary band
Derives from him who first with impious hand,
Presumptuous daring, and irreverent toil,
Depriv'd of life the guardian of this soil;
Then from the boughs the golden apples tore;
From weeping goddesses their treasure bore.
Scarce day preceding his career began,
Ere he appear'd, this rude oppressive man.
Well fitted he to wreak the mental storm,
Vast in his strength, and dreadful in his form.
His eyes dart fierce intolerable flame;
A lion's spoils enwrap his giant frame.
His hand a ponderous trunk of olive bore,
Free from the workman's art, and stain'd with gore;
And mighty bow from whence those arrows fled,
Too fatal shafts, that laid yon serpent dead!
His steps had trac'd a weary length of way;
And, thirsty from the parching glare of day,
He search'd for water through the plains around;
But none to cheer his eager eyes he found.
As rageful and despairing thus he stray'd,
Or he discover'd, or some god display'd
Yon rock; near Pallas[18] lake it stands alone,
And with his heel he smote the solid stone.
Freed by the stroke abundant waters sprung;
With eager transport to the ground he clung,

[18] The lake Tritonis.

With ample chest outspread, and nervous hands;
Incessant draughts his furious thirst demands;
The fountain from its rocky bed he drains,
Prone like an ox that grazes on the plains.'
She ceas'd. And to the fount that Æglè told,
Most sought, most wish'd, their joyful course they hold,
Full soon discover'd; with contention loud,
And frantic eagerness, around they crowd;
As swarming ants, an active busy band,
Throng round a fissure in the thirsty land,
The granary where prudent toil has stor'd
The plunder of the barn, their winter's hoard;
Heap'd on each other, as the clust'ring flies
A formless mass compose, where honey lies,
With restless murmur urge their greedy flight,
Pursue the sweets, and on each other light.
When the first draught some thirsty wretch had cheer'd,
How was Alcides to his heart endear'd!
With moisten'd lips, and with expanding breast,
The soften'd soul these grateful words confess'd:
'Ev'n absent, godlike chief, the social band
Feel the protection of that peerless hand!
Ev'n absent thou hast sav'd the toil-worn train
From burning death upon a thirsty plain!
Oh might our search along the distant soil
Regain the partner of our glorious toil!'
Nor vain the word, the crowd to council went.
The general voice selected heroes sent,
By various paths, if tidings might be gain'd,
Where yet Alcides in those wilds remain'd.
Perplexing task! for on that sandy ground,
No lasting prints of human step were found;
The nightly breezes with incessant sway
Eras'd the vagrant traces of the day.

The sons of Boreas that hard task desir'd,
(Their airy pinions confidence inspir'd)
Euphemus, trusting in his footsteps light,
And Lynceus boasting of unequall'd sight;
A fifth to friendship true, bold Canthus came,
By ruling fates impell'd, and virtue's flame.
Still, still his heart recall'd the parted friend,
And social feelings bade him thus attend;
That, finding Hercules, he might demand
His Polyphemus at the hero's hand.
No fear of rousing that impatient ire,
No face of toil abates the strong desire,
Resolv'd to learn what chances they had prov'd,
And where Alcides left the man he lov'd.
Ev'n then his friend had rear'd, in Mysia's soil,
A town that spake the founder's patriot toil;
Then rang'd enamour'd of his native plain,
To seek the vessel and the social train,
Till in his course, o'er many a region wide,
He reach'd the Chalybes and ocean's side.
But there the fates ordain'd his resting place;
He fell in combat with that hardy race.
Where the tall poplar waves, and billow flows,
Sacred to him the monument arose.

But now the chosen missionaries pass'd
With eager footsteps o'er the trackless waste.
Their painful search the godlike man pursues;
Him Lynceus far remote and lonely views,
Or seems to view, as o'er the spreading lawn,
Through gray beginnings of the doubtful dawn,
And floating mists, the gazer darts his eyes,
And sees, or thinks he sees, the moon arise.
Return'd with speedy step he warn'd the train,
That search prolong'd, and anxious cares were vain

'Hope not the subject of our wish to see,
Remote and evanescent ev'n to me;
Hope not that others shall his wanderings trace,
When Lynceus turns despairing from the chase.'
The swift Euphemus, and the plumed pair,
Alike to find the godlike chief despair.
But mortal destinies on Canthus call.
Forward he press'd in Lybian wilds to fall.
Encountering there the huts, and fleecy fold,
The wants of his companions made him bold;
He strove to bear away the bleating prize,
The guardian of the flock indignant flies;
The' ill-fated spoiler with a stone he fell'd;
No feeble arm the ponderous mass impell'd;
For bold Caphareus, such the shepherd's name,
From heav'n possess'd a spark of daring flame,
And with the' opponent match'd in vigour strode,
Deriv'd from him, the Lycorean god [19],
His grandsire. When resplendent beauty's boast,
Fair Acacallis sought the Lybian coast,
Sent by her sire, stern Minos, to that shore,
Her womb the progeny of Phebus bore;
And gave to him, that guides the car of day,
An infant lovely as the father's ray,
Amphithemis or Garamas, for styl'd
By various titles was the graceful child.
When rising youth bade amorous feelings wake,
He woo'd a nymph of the Tritonian lake.
The beauteous nymph a mutual passion own'd,
Their loves with Nasamon Caphareus crown'd.
To guard his flocks the careful shepherd bent
To shades below the gentle Canthus sent,

[19] Apollo so called.

Not long to triumph; for the Grecian band
Aveng'd their comrade on the slayer's hand.
With patient steps they sought him o'er the plains,
And mourning bore away his bold remains.
O'er Canthus the sepulchral earth they spread,
While pious tears embalm'd the virtuous dead;
And seized the flocks, unhappy cause of strife,
Lamented price of their companion's life.
To thee too, Mopsus, fatal was that day,
A doom relentless summon'd thee away.
Not all his skill in augury could save
The son of prescience from the' untimely grave;
For who may death elude? Immense in length,
A serpent shunn'd the day's meridian strength.
Stretch'd in the sand, o'erpow'r'd with sultry heats,
Tardy to follow where the prey retreats,
He shunn'd the' attack, relax'd in every spire,
Languid to strike, nor active in his ire;
But, once provok'd, his fangs such mischief fill'd,
Such deadly venom from his jaws distill'd,
Might never living thing its influence bear;
The bane receiv'd, the mortal hour was near;
Where his fell tooth the slightest print applied,
The rankling wound ev'n aid from heaven defied;
Not Pæan (author of the healing art,
As legends tell) could ease the mortal smart.
When godlike Perseus, whom his mother styl'd
Eurymedon, high o'er the Lybian wild
The sever'd head of direful Gorgon bore,
Warm from the falchion and distilling gore;
In sable drops, where'er the blood was shed,
The teeming soil a race of serpents bred.
Such lay the serpent. With unboding breast,
As Mopsus pass'd, the monster's spine he press'd.

Rous'd by the pain, the monster wreath'd around
His ancle, and infix'd the burning wound.
Deep, deep with vengeful tooth the flesh he tore,
And mix'd his poison with the spouting gore;
Medea shriek'd, and shriek'd her female train;
The generous hero, unsubdued by pain,
The gory wound with hand intrepid press'd;
The poison thence but slowly reach'd his breast.
Ah wretch! he feels the stroke of fate advance,
From vein to vein inducing mortal trance.
O'er every sense a dire oblivion steals,
His swimming eyes a waving blackness seals;
On earth reclin'd, with powerless limbs he lay,
And cold and rigid breath'd his soul away.
Collected round aghast his comrades gaze,
Aghast their leader stood, in dire amaze.
A spectacle so sudden and so dread!
Their friend so quickly number'd with the dead!
Smote every heart. Nor could the dead remain,
Expos'd a moment welt'ring on the plain,
Beneath the sun; for now through all the corse
The subtle poison spread putrescent force.
From limb to limb the dissolution flew;
From every pore exuded clammy dew.
The brazen mattocks his companions wield,
And soon a trench is open'd in the field;
Deep in its womb the putrid mass they lay,
And heap with needful haste the' incumbent clay.
The mourning warriors and the softer kind
The shining honours of their heads resign'd.
With trembling hands o'er all the grave they spread
Their parted locks, in honour of the dead;
And thrice with pious hand they heap'd the ground;
And compass'd thrice in arms the rising mound.

Now to the ship return'd, as o'er the deep
The southern winds with humid pinions sweep,
Long time they hover'd; and, with doubting mind,
Some passage sought from Triton's lake to find.
No fix'd resolves the veering purpose stay;
Now here, now there, they shape the' uncertain way.
As, smote by noontide shafts, the writhing snake
The path oblique with sinuous toil may make,
From side to side the hissing head he turns,
His flaming eye with fire malignant burns,
Nor ceases till he spies with piercing ken
The secret passage to his murky den;
Thus Argo long her course uncertain winds,
Ere yet an outlet from the lake she finds.
Till Orpheus bade them, from the ship display
A tripod, hallow'd to the god of day,
And consecrate the gift with pious hand,
To native deities, that guard the land.
When disembarking on the shore they laid
The sacred offering, first for Phebus made;
Then Triton, ruler of the lake, appear'd;
A seeming youth his graceful form he rear'd.
A verdant sod he lifted from the plain,
As pledge of friendship, and address'd the train.
'Hail gallant youths, from Triton's hand receive
A friendly pledge, that never shall deceive,
Assurance of protection, ere ye go;
No greater can a deity bestow.
If haply ye desire with anxious mind,
To learn, (what mariners would seek to find)
What outlets of this lake as yet untried,
May lead embarrass'd barks to reach the tide;
All this with truth unerring I can speak.
Ordain'd by Neptune guardian of each creek,

Harbour, and station of the Lybian main,
O'er all the coast a wide extent I reign,
From distant climes ye come, yet haply fame
Has made your ears familiar with my name,
Eurypylus; this monster-teeming earth,
Subject of fable, is my place of birth.'
Euphemus answer'd; with expressions bland,
The pledge [20] receiving with a grateful hand:
'Where Apis lies and where the seas of Crete,
If such thy knowledge, noble chief, repeat.
No vain inquirers we from shore to shore,
That, idly curious, distant realms explore;
But dire necessity controls our course,
These realms we visit through the whirlwind's force.
Long tempest-tost our labouring vessel found
This continent, on earth's remotest bound.
And long with force combin'd, and weary toil,
We bore the ponderous vessel o'er the soil;
To shun the terrors that the Syrtes wake,
And float her safely, in this ample lake;
In pity then to strangers led astray,
To Pelops' land reveal the nearest way.'
The Lybian answers, as Euphemus ends,
And while he speaks his levell'd arm extends;
Remote the sea in prospect wide he shows,
Near a deep outlet from the lake that flows.
'This passage to the main a vessel bears,
Where in the blackness, central depth appears;
White on each side, the sandy banks arise,
And shallow there pellucid water lies.
The dangerous banks a narrow strait unfold,
Most needful 'tis the middle course to hold;

[20] The sod.

Yon sea, which scarce the dazzled sight explores,
Leads you past Crete to Pelopeian shores.
When steering from the lake the right ye keep,
And now the bark is wafted to the deep;
With steady hand your vessel then restrain,
Pursue the shore, nor rashly seek the main;
Till boldly swelling, as your course you shape,
The land throws forward a projecting cape.
Then spread your canvass, onward plough the way,
Your youthful vigour let no toil dismay.'
He spake benevolent. The bark they fill;
And through the lake exert the rower's skill.
With cries of joy proceed the' exulting band,
Meanwhile, the tripod shone in Triton's hand;
Full soon he vanish'd with the sacred prize,
Beneath the lake conceal'd from mortal eyes.
Inly rejoic'd the' heroic band, to find
Their late instructor of celestial kind.
Then, Jason bids for sacrifice prepare
The first and fairest of the fleecy care,
So lately won, and pious vows to raise,
To call protection on their future ways.
The chosen victim at the prow was slain,
And pray'rs accompanied from all the train:
'Oh thou divine, that here, to mortals shown,
Thy form reveal'd, thy title yet unknown,
Whoe'er thou art, assign'd these bounds to keep,
Or Triton, wonder of the vasty deep,
Phorcys, or Nereus, ruler of the wave,
Offspring of nymphs that in the billows lave:
Indulgent hear. Thy favour may we boast;
Propitious guide us to the native coast.'
Thus pray'd the chief, the victim as he slew,
And bleeding warm amid the billows threw;

Then Triton awful from the depths arose,
His genuine form in majesty he shows.
As when some youth, in active vigour bold,
The fiery courser by the mane will hold,
And nimbly wheel him round with active force,
Through the large space where rival chariots course,
The steed pursues his leader's rapid pace,
His graceful neck curv'd high with haughty grace;
With champing teeth he makes the curb resound,
And white as snow the foam is dash'd around;
With mighty hand thus Triton grasp'd the keel,
And bade the ship resistless impulse feel.
His form above such majesty and grace
Combin'd as prov'd him of celestial race,
Fair to the middle, but the parts below
A fishy form, with strange discordance show;
A tail enormous lengthens out his spine;
With forky fins he ploughs the foamy brine;
Turn'd in a shining curve, such shape they wear,
As when fair Luna's crescent horns appear.
On to the sea the vessel he impell'd,
And more secure the forward course she held.
That service render'd from their sight he fled,
And plunging sought old ocean's cavern'd bed.
The portent fill'd the heroes with surprise,
From all the deck the shouts of wonder rise.
There, Argo's name the harbour yet retains;
Still of that ship some monument remains;
For altars yet are seen with grateful hand,
To Neptune rais'd, and Triton, by the band.
There for a day their voyage they delay'd,
The morrow's sun their spreading sails survey'd;
And swiftly gliding as the zephyr swept,
A desert land upon their right they kept.

When the next morn renew'd her rosy light,
Projecting far a headland rose in sight,
Retir'd behind a deep indented bay,
A safe recess, beneath its shelter lay.
Now Zephyr ceas'd, and southern blasts prevail'd,
With joyful shouts the favouring breeze they hail'd.
Then Phebus sunk, and Hesper rais'd his head,
To summon labour to his homely bed,
Sweet star of love, that brings, with solace fair,
Rest and oblivion of the peasant's care.
As night's still empire lull'd the falling wind,
They furl'd their canvass, and the mast inclin'd.
Incumbent then the polish'd oars they ply'd,
And smote with vigorous arms the foamy tide;
All night, all day, they combated the wave,
Nor rest from toil the night succeeding gave;
From far the rocks of Carpathus appear;
Thence, onward to the shores of Crete they steer.
For chief of islands, Crete attracts their course,
But there oppos'd they meet portentous force.
  High on a cliff the brazen Talus stands,
With brandish'd rocks he interdicts the lands;
No stranger may the' unfriendly port explore,
No vessel moor along the guarded shore.
Son of that brazen race in elder time,
Deriv'd from trees, robust for every crime,
Him sole remaining branch, the thunderer grac'd,
And him with demi-gods his favour plac'd,
Ordain'd to guard his lov'd Europa's charms,
And keep her favourite isle from rude alarms:
For annual thrice he compass'd all around,
With brazen feet, the precincts of that ground.
His giant frame he rear'd, untaught to feel
The trenchant brass or sharply pointed steel,

Save where a vein, that from his head extends,
Pursues the chine, then in his ancle ends.
Red through this duct, where vital currents bound,
The magic form was pervious to the wound.
The skin alone confin'd the purple tide,
And slightest barriers life from death divide.
The form terrific aw'd the' adventurous band,
Though present wants some friendly port demand,
They push from those inhospitable shores,
And urge the labouring bark with bending oars.
Now, far from Crete their course they had pursued,
Though thirst and anguish every soul subdued;
But fair Medea thus the crowd address'd,
And comfort cheer'd each agitated breast.

'Hear, warriors—brazen though this monster tow'r,
Let not a visage with despondence low'r;
If mortal he the breath of heav'n inhale,
Beneath my hand his boasted strength shall fail,
Your vessel station, and avoid the shock,
Secure in distance from the volley'd rock;
There patient wait, until with art profound
I lay this monster prostrate on the ground.'
They row'd obedient past the range of harms,
The direful volleys from those brazen arms;
And waited to behold Medea's skill
The promis'd wonders of her art fulfil.

Before her face the Colchian fair extends
Her purple robe, and thus the deck ascends;
The son of Æson by the hand she drew,
From bank to bank, where sate the gallant crew.
With sweetest witchery she chanted strain,
Of soothing melody and lull'd the train
Of destinies that harrow up the mind,
And fill with terrors feeble human kind.

The messengers of hell that wing the air,
And mortals fill with anguish and despair;
These were invok'd, and thrice her magic song,
And thrice her pray'rs address'd the direful throng.
The potent charms the giant's soul subdued,
The' enchantress then her victory pursued;
Her flashing eyes she fill'd with noxious ire,
His glances sunk beneath the deadly fire;
In rage she grew, her grinding teeth she gnash'd,
Infernal vapours on the foe she dash'd;
Goblins she call'd, and hateful spectres round,
And bade the forms of hell his soul confound.
'Oh! father Jove,' he cried, 'what gloom o'ershades,
What torpid influence every sense invades?
Must we not fear alone disease and wound?
Shall distant foes with magic art confound?'
Though firm in solid brass the giant tow'rs,
He feels the weight of magic's fearful pow'rs;
Yet still his hands the task of warfare ply,
Still rocky fragments fill the darken'd sky.
While massive volley thus, and menace rude,
The labouring vessel from the port exclude;
His vulnerable part, with mighty shock,
His ancle dash'd against the pointed rock;
Then ichor gush'd from the metallic frame,
Like boiling lead dissolv'd before the flame;
Nor long his station on that rock he fills,
Like some enormous pine on airy hills,
Which biting axes, urg'd by rustic might,
Half-fell'd, abandon at the' approach of night;
Full soon nocturnal blasts the foliage rend,
Shake the tall stem, and on the rocks extend;
The limbs awhile the giant form sustain,
Then faint it sinks, and thundering loads the plain.

The harbour now receives the joyful band,
That night they pass upon the Cretan land;
A fane they rais'd, when early morn appear'd
To Pallas, by the sons of Crete rever'd.
With store of water from the spring supplied,
Again they man the bark, and plough the tide;
Eager to pass Salmonium's point around,
With bending oars they vex the salt profound;
As o'er the swell of Cretan seas they flew,
Unwonted terrors night around them threw;
Shrouded they were in blackness of the tomb,
No beamy star dispers'd the solid gloom;
The struggling glimpses of the moonlight fail'd,
And shades infernal o'er the world prevail'd.
The sailors know not, darkling as they rove,
Whether in Orcus or the deep they move;
And to the wind and to the wave confide
The random course they can no longer guide.
Then Jason, fill'd with anguish and dismay,
Fervent and loud invok'd the source of day;
He call'd on Phebus to protect the train,
While copious tears distill'd like briny rain;
He vow'd oblations to the Pythian shrine,
To crown with offerings Amyclæ divine;
He vow'd to Delos gifts immense to bear,
For aid imparted in that hour of fear.
Thou heardst, propitious pow'r, from realms of light,
With succour prompt, Apollo wing'd his flight;
Melantian rocks amid the waves arise,
And one receives him bending from the skies;
His right hand bare aloft the golden bow,
Thence wide in air the streaming splendours flow;
Where thick the deep is sown with many an isle,
The clustering Sporades in prospect smile;

An islet of the group arises near,
Though small in compass, to the wishes dear;
Full opposite the small Hippuris rose,
And anchor'd here, the train respire from woes.
The rising morn was fled, with pious care
A goodly shrine for Phebus they prepare;
And place his altar in the sacred shade,
Where stately groves religious gloom display'd.
They call'd Ægletes[21], bounteous source of light,
With appellation new and solemn rite;
They gave that craggy island's small extent
A name, expressive of the glad event;
Propitious Anaphe[22], reveal'd to sight,
With cheering radiance by the God of light.
Such vows were paid as poverty could find,
For scanty means the liberal heart confin'd;
Where neither lowing herds nor flocks were found,
Nor vines nor olives clad the sterile ground.
But when the maids that from Phæacia came,
Beheld the warriors by the torches' flame,
Along the margin of the rocky bay
Unmix'd libations from the fountain pay;
Loud bursts of laughter from the heedless breast
Their foolish scorn of indigence express'd;
And much they turn'd to transitory sport,
A scene so different from Phæacia's court;
For there the blood of countless victims stream'd,
And altars there with wine and incense steam'd.
With taunts their levity the youths assail'd,
While secret pleasure at their mirth prevail'd;
Nor end they thus, the maidens quick replied,
And gay contention rose from side to side.

[21] Ægletes, an epithet or appellation of Apollo.
[22] From a Greek verb, that signifies *to show*.

From their glad warfare in alternate strain,
Still does that isle the war of wit retain;
Ægletes bright, in Anaphè rever'd,
By mirthful sallies are thy rites endear'd.
Their placid mirror the calm waves expand,
The heroes loose their halsers from the land;
Mindful of visions, in the night survey'd,
His vows to Maia's son Euphemus paid;
What Heav'n design'd, as yet untaught to know,
But thus his words described the mystic show:
'That sod, methought, the pledge of heav'nly aid,
Giv'n to my hand, upon my breast I laid;
There the small mass, with milky currents fed,
Extending, warm with life a female spread,
A beauteous maid. I gaz'd upon her face,
And fondly strain'd her in a dear embrace;
For sov'reign beauty fill'd me with desire,
And shot from every pore resistless fire.
My passion sated, calmer thoughts succeed,
And keen remorse pursues the' incautious deed.
I mourn'd with horror that I had possess'd
My child, that infant nurtur'd at my breast.
But she, to cheer me with soft soothing grace,
"No daughter I, but born of Triton's race.
I come from Lybia, my paternal land,
Nurse of thy progeny, a gracious band.
Oh! youth belov'd. My father bade me share
A portion in the deep with Nereids fair.
Near Anaphè, surrounded by the main,
That mansion for thy children I retain;
Soon shall I bid the dimpling waves display
The surface fair, to drink the solar ray".'
Euphemus thus recall'd to Jason's thought
The forms of wonder that his vision wrought.

The chief revolv'd the prophecies divine,
In times preceding giv'n from Phebus' shrine;
And thus replies: 'No doubt the gods intend,
That fame immortal shall adorn my friend.
Their pow'r shall bid the pledge that Triton gave
Become an isle when trusted to the wave;
Thy children's children shall possess that land,
Since Triton gave possession to thine hand;
Triton, for he, of all the' immortal train,
Bestow'd this portion of the Lybian plain.'
His answer with Euphemus' thought accords,
He hastes completion of the' auspicious words;
The hallow'd sod into the deep he threw,
And where it plung'd Callisté rose to view;
An isle where nature wore her happiest face,
The sacred nurse, Euphemus, of thy race.
That race in after ages Lemnos held,
By Tuscan inroad from those seats expell'd;
The wandering exiles reach'd Laconia's soil,
Where generous Sparta own'd their thriving toil.
The gallant Theras, from Autesion sprung,
From Sparta led the' adventurous and the young;
At sweet Callisté they their wand'rings clos'd,
And fix'd content their leader's name impos'd.
But these events succeeding time display'd,
When swift Euphemus was an airy shade;
From thence the' adventurers urg'd their rapid way,
Till fair Ægina claim'd a short delay;
Though bent on speed they seek the friendly shores,
And eager thirst the cooling fount explores;
Then rose an harmless strife among the train,
Who first with water should the vessel gain;
While double cause of prompt dispatch they find
In pressing want, and in the' impetuous wind;

And hence deriv'd, as ancient story runs,
A custom lives among Thessalia's sons;
And youthful racers urns of water bear,
As to the goal with active limbs they steer.
Hail, gallant youths! hail, bless'd immortal breed
Propitious to your poet now proceed!
More sweet, more tuneable, from day to day,
From year to year resound the votive lay;
Exulting labour sees the goal appear,
That aspiration of my soul is near.
Great heirs of glory, ever famous throng,
O may your names immortalize my song!
Now let the poet with his heroes rest,
From weary vigils spare the harass'd breast.
By land no perils wait the gallant train,
No future tempests menace o'er the main;
Cecropian hills behold the vessel glide,
With prosperous gale and gently swelling tide.
Near Aulis then they trace the level brine,
And Locrian cities of Opuntian line;
The bay of Pagasæ receives them last,
With shouts exulting o'er the labours past.

END OF VOL. II.

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